

THE ESSENCE OF STUDY ABROAD: GLOBAL ACCESS FOR THE
AFRICAN AMERICAN LEARNER

by
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Abstract

Leaders of institutions of higher education face a difficult task, continuously adapting to a changing world while educating tomorrow's leaders. Global connectivity is one driving force behind this push for global citizenship within higher education. Literature indicates that higher education institution leaders should provide meaningful but equitable opportunities for all students. In the United States, there are significant inequities that exist within education, particularly international education. Explored through a lens of critical race theory, this study showed the experiences of African American students who managed to study abroad and their preparedness to study abroad. Compared to students with no global experience, study abroad students found employment sooner following graduation, earned higher starting salaries, and gained promotions over their peers who had not studied abroad. Limited knowledge of study abroad can result in limited experiences for African American students and lead to disparities that span far beyond the college experience. This phenomenological approach highlighted the African American experience abroad. This study showed insights into practical strategies for improving study abroad outcomes and experiences for African American students and outlined practice implications within higher education settings.

Keywords: Study abroad, African American, critical race theory, preparedness, higher education



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Dedication

I am here because of my ancestors- the strongest or the strong, who endured the unthinkable. This dissertation is possible because of them. I know the shoulders that I stand on and will never take that responsibility for granted.

This dissertation is dedicated to my family. I will never forget the sacrifices you made to make this dissertation possible. I am so grateful for the village I have. There are not enough words to thank you all for your willingness to sacrifice and drop everything over the last three years, even in the middle of a pandemic, to make sure I saw this through to completion. And to my son, Courtney Xavier, this is for you. Always remember you can do all things through Christ who gives you strength.

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meals, prayers, texts of encouragement, faith, and perseverance, you encouraged me to push through.

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I give thanks to the Lord Almighty. Seeing God's hand through every phase of this journey is humbling and a testimony! Having given birth to a child who spent five days in the NICU, seven days before the start of my doctoral program presented an immediate challenge. Only by the grace of God could I be one of the few who saw this through to completion. And I will forever be humbled and in awe of how God always provides.

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Chapter 1: Literature Synthesis

Although the personal and professional benefits of studying abroad are widely accepted, the opportunity to study abroad is often unattainable for African American students attending four-year colleges and universities. For this research, the study abroad is defined as taking academic classes or participating in internships in a foreign country. Despite the limited studies addressing African Americans' study abroad outcomes, some researchers found a significant relationship between African American students who studied abroad and academic success. Higher grade point averages, graduation rates, and acceptance to graduate and professional schools show this success (Lebold et al., 2005; Redden, 2010; Sutton & Rubin, 2010). Additionally, researchers found that African American students who studied abroad were 30% more likely than African American students who did not study abroad to graduate in four years (Redden, 2010). Without experience abroad, African American students are at a significant disadvantage compared to those who take advantage of international opportunities (Lebold et al., 2005; Redden, 2010; Wang, Gault, Christ, & Diggin, 2016).

Furthermore, existing literature showed that stakeholders indicated connections between employability and study abroad participation for college and university students. In a survey conducted by Crossman and Clarke (2010), one employer reported that graduates with international experience managed tasks, built business relationships, and excelled in more culturally sensitive situations compared to their peers without international experience. Preston (2012) noted that studying abroad exposed a person to global thinking, a distinguishing factor among graduates. Overall, the professional competencies of study abroad participants surpassed their peers who had not studied abroad. Therefore, higher education institution leaders should equitably prepare all students to access global opportunities.

Although the term of African American was typically used to describe ethnicity while Black described race (Quander & Froneberger, 2019), this researcher focused on the African American experience abroad. Often used interchangeably, the term African American is nation-specific and traditionally refers to Black people born in the United States (Watkins-Hayes, 2019).

Problem of Practice

Researchers found that most African American students entering college were interested in studying abroad (Penn & Tanner, 2009). However, African American students are 80% less likely to study abroad than White students (Institute of International Education [IIE], 2020; Milian, Birnbaum, Cardona, & Nicholson, 2015; Wang et al., 2016). Fry and Brux (2009) stated that more than half of their African American participants reported not knowing about study abroad opportunities, and 85% of them were never approached by university administration or faculty about international opportunities. Moreover, students reported two key deterrents in determining whether to study abroad: cost and lack of information about study abroad (Bakalis & Joiner, 2004; He & Banham, 2011).

Understanding the study abroad process and what is needed to participate in study abroad is key to taking advantage of such opportunities. Uninformed students will find themselves both unprepared and unable to navigate the study abroad process. For this study, study abroad preparedness is defined as a person's belief that they have the skills and resources needed to navigate and participate in the study abroad process successfully inspired by Bandura's (1995) social cognitive learning theory (Bikos, Manning, & Frieders, 2019). In traditional educational research, the belief that one possesses the skillset to complete a task or behavior is referred to as self-efficacy. Therefore, the problem of practice underscored in this study was that African

American students did not study abroad at rates that mirrored their higher education enrollment (IIE, 2020).

Historical context. A spate of previous research indicates that in addition to lacking information and funding (e.g., foregone earnings while abroad), prospective study abroad students report fears about racism and discrimination, familial and community reservations and concerns, and lack of relevant programs that impact study abroad participation for African American students (Fry & Brux, 2009; Raby, 2006; Rhoads & Szelenyi, 2011). However, one must review the historical context of higher education within the United States to understand better the current state of international education and its engagement of African American students. Historically, people of color faced adversity while attempting to receive fair and equal treatment in the United States. The Trail of Tears, Japanese Internment camps, involuntary repatriation of more than 2 million Mexicans (60% of whom were American citizens), and slavery are just some examples of experiences endured by people of color in the United States (Blakemore, 2017). These gross instances of discrimination, exclusion, and mistreatment of people of color have carried over into the education system (Bauman, Bustillos, Bensimon, Brown, & Bartee, 2005; Karen, 2002).

Due to limited educational integration, underfunded schools of color, and both the protection and encouragement of White flight, many U.S. primary and secondary schools remain segregated (Blanchett, Mumford, & Beachum, 2005). Orfield and Lee (2004) reported that in 2001, California, Illinois, Michigan, and New York were the most segregated states in the United States. For both California and New York, only one in seven African American children attended a predominantly White school (Orfield & Lee, 2004). Many American schools remain segregated and unequal more than 65 years after the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision (History.com,

2009). Study abroad is one area of education that also remains a White educational space. Despite the knowledge of overrepresentation of White students studying abroad, little has been done to create equitable access to international opportunities.

The Higher Education Act of 1965 gave all students who qualified for governmental financial aid access to postsecondary education. For many students of color who had previously been unable to afford higher education, this act became a great equalizer (Levin & Levin, 1991). However, the literature indicates that from the early 1960s through the present, students of color continue to have higher attrition rates, greater instances of lacking the skills to be college-ready, and lower graduation rates (Chavez & Maestas-Flores, 1991; Grayson, 1998; NCES, 2019).

Although the number of students of color attending U.S. colleges and universities continues to increase, the increase is happening slowly (McKinley, 2014). Between 2005 and 2010, the number of African American and Latino students enrolled in higher education institutions increased by less than 3% (Sweeney, 2013). In this timeframe, the percent of American Indian/Alaska Natives and Asian/Pacific Islanders enrolled in higher education institutions remained unchanged at less than 1%. Understanding the educational barriers for students of color is key to increasing equity, particularly for African American students.

African Americans' pervasive educational inequities are deeply ingrained in the fabric of the U.S. education system (Bauman et al., 2005; Karen, 2002). Before and during the Civil War, people of color were educated at the indulgences of Whites. Many former slaves and free Black children learned in schools created with the help of White abolitionists and Quakers (Karen, 2002; Roebuck & Murty, 1993; Weinberg, 1977). At the beginning of the Reconstruction Period and the end of the Civil War in 1865, many newly freed slaves demanded education. Therefore, Black learners entered segregated educational institutions maintained with fewer resources than

White schools and lower quality facilities (Wilson, 1969). The development of historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) in 1837 provided an opportunity for African American students to learn while keeping them from predominantly White institutions (PWIs; Karen, 2002; Roebuck & Murty, 1993; Weinberg, 1977). However, this separation did not stop hate groups from terrorizing and burning down Black schools throughout the 19th and 20th centuries (Pratt, 1993; Weinberg, 1977).

Within the United States, African Americans continue to fight to receive fair and equal access to education. Six decades after *Brown*, African Americans still endure an oppressive system designed to keep them educated in separate and unequal silos (McNairy, 1996). Furthermore, although educational enrollment and graduation numbers increase, these numbers are incomparable to enrollment numbers for their White peers. This finding mirrors the issue of equity in study abroad. Although there is an increase in the numbers of diverse students enrolling in higher education institutions, this statistic is not reflective of the rates at which diverse students study abroad. Given the importance of education and its role in creating opportunities for economic advancement (Dervarics, 1989), establishing ways to address these inconsistencies is crucial.

Educational advancement. These inconsistencies were evident long before African American learners enroll in college. When assessing African American student achievement, researchers found that the further such students move along in the education system, the more they fall behind (Kuh, 2009; Steele, 1992; Welton & Martinez, 2014). African American students typically begin their elementary school education with test scores on par with White students their age (Barnum, 2018; Steele & Aronson, 1995). By the sixth grade, many African American students' achievement levels are two full grade levels behind those of White students

(Barnum, 2018; Welton & Martinez, 2014). This trend continues through high school (Barnum, 2018; Steele & Aronson, 1995; Welton & Martinez, 2014).

This pattern holds true across socioeconomic statuses. Researchers noted financial factors as contributing to this educational gap, given that many of those falling behind were from lower-income families and attended poorly funded schools. However, recent findings indicated that the achievement gap existed even when considering higher income African American families (Coleman, 1988; Tensley, 2015). Therefore, in situations where both African American students and White students come from affluent families with a diverse school makeup, significant gaps in achievement still exist (Black, Cortes, & Lincove, 2015; Coleman, 1988).

This disparity existed even though research indicated that both middle-class and poorer African American families valued education more than Whites (Steele, 1992). When looking at African American students from low-income families, they were 8% less likely to graduate from high school and attend college than White students with the same family income (Barnum, 2018; Black et al., 2015). Educational barriers, such as exclusionary practices founded in racism, lower socioeconomic backgrounds due to racially biased pay scales, and unwelcome campus environments, are some reasons for this discrepancy (Barnum, 2018; Welton & Martinez, 2014).

Consequently, there are still significant gaps in the percentage of White students who enter college prepared than African American students (Bridges, 2018). Many African American students lack exposure to the rigorous core and Advanced Placement courses needed to excel in higher education (Bastedo & Jaquette, 2011; Black et al., 2015; Theokas & Saaris, 2013). Although 71% of White students have access to science and math courses required for college readiness, these courses are only available to 57% of African American learners (Bridges, 2018). Additionally, the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (2014) noted that 25%

of high schools with the largest percentage of African American and Latinx students did not offer Algebra II classes. Also, more than 30% of these schools did not offer chemistry.

Researchers confirmed that a college degree's educational benefits included higher earnings and increased satisfaction with life (Bridges, 2018; Hill & Winston, 2010; Tensley, 2015). However, a lack of access to core courses, colleges' and universities' unwillingness to accept African American students, and the lack of personnel of color at higher education institutions show why inequities in higher education remain prevalent centuries later (The National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2011; Steele & Aronson, 1995; Sweeney, 2013).

Educational barriers. The NCES (2019) reported that between 2000 and 2017, the total number of undergraduate students enrolled at degree-granting postsecondary institutions increased by more than 25%. Of those enrolled in 2017, 53% were White, 2% were Hispanic, approximately 1% were African American, and less than 1% were Asian/Pacific-Islander or American Indian/Alaska Native. Although the number of students of color pursuing a college education has increased, they remain underrepresented.

Many factors contribute to the lack of representation among students of color. Financial factors, such as high tuition costs, function as significant drivers that result in many students relying on student loans to pay for their educations (Steele & Aronson, 1995; Welton & Martinez, 2014). This factor is truer for African American students more than any other racial group (Houle & Addo, 2019; Kitroeff, 2014). Many African American students find overcoming the various education barriers challenging without considering co-curricular experiences, such as studying abroad. Some students see studying abroad as an additional obstacle that, if not prioritized, is not worth the effort. Understanding the barriers that students face while enrolled in college can help institutional leaders make more informed decisions about how to provide

support as students navigate the many opportunities that higher education offers. Studying abroad is no exception.

The high costs of educational advancement are not a new concept within the American education system. Ronald Story noted that in 1820, Harvard University implemented rising tuition costs and more demanding admissions standards while relying on full tuition-paying students for sustainability (Bowen, Kurzweil, & Tobin, 2005). During this same period, Columbia University remained available only to the elite as the most expensive college in the United States only enrolling the sons of professionals and property holders (Bowen et al., 2005).

Many U.S. Black people saw education as key to building their lives outside of slavery. Before the start of the Civil War, only between 10% to 15% of the Black population in the South was literate (PBS, n.d.). The first Morrill Act or Land Grant Act of 1862 was established during the Civil War and provided states with 30,000 acres of land per congressional seat to establish colleges specializing in agriculture (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2019). This process began the development of state higher education institutions.

However, the educational opportunities provided by the First Morrill Act did not extend to most Black people living in America at that time. Legislation passed in most southern states in 1829 deemed it illegal to teach slaves to read or write (Butchart, 2002; PBS, n.d.). The end of the Civil War and slavery in 1865 resulted in a demand for former slaves to be educated. This act prompted the creation of the Freedman's Schools, created to educate newly freed slaves. These schools were typically sponsored by Northern freedmen's associations and literate Black women and men (Butchart, 2002).

The second Morrill Act of 1890 was the catalyst for educational change for African Americans. Support of the existing Black normal schools, schools designed to educate Black

teachers, mandated by the act, along with minimal funding for the founding of Black Land-Grant colleges, provided educational opportunities for African American learners at varying levels of wealth (Bowen et al., 2005). These additional educational opportunities provided African Americans with increased higher education options and economic advancement opportunities.

At present, the benefits associated with receiving a college or university degree are clear—increased employability, upward social mobility, and higher economic potential (Brand & Xie, 2010; Long & Kurlaender, 2009). The financial risks for African American students are apparent. The NCES (2019) reported that attending college was a higher financial risk for African Americans than any other group. Approximately 80% of African American college students assumed significant financial debt to fund their educations (Fernandes, 2017). African American students are more likely to take out federal loans to pay for their educations, start from a lower socioeconomic statuses, and earn less after graduation than all other ethnic groups (Fernandes, 2017). Taking advantage of opportunities, such as studying abroad, can lead to greater financial returns is critical for African Americans. Consequently, many African American students are economically unequipped to eliminate debt associated with funding their educations.

Data show that more than a decade after enrolling in college, African Americans owe more than they borrowed for their college educations. African American students who started their college careers between 2003 and 2004 owed 113% of their original student loans in 2016. In comparison, Hispanic students owed 83% of their original student loans in that same time frame, and White students owed only 65% of their original loans (Fernandes, 2017; Kitroeff, 2014). Given many African American students struggle to pay for their college educations, some do not want to have additional financial responsibilities associated with studying abroad.

Without a firm understanding of the specific returns on international experiences, studying abroad is often viewed as an unnecessary investment.

Researchers confirmed that in 2012, 63% of White students borrowed to get their bachelor's degrees compared to 81% of African American graduates (Akers & Chingos, 2014; Huelsman, 2015). African American students also borrowed \$3,500 more than the average White student (Akers & Chingos, 2014; Huelsman, 2015; Scott-Clayton & Li, 2016). Thus, African American students borrowed higher amounts at higher rates than all other students. On average, African American families earned lower incomes than all other ethnic groups (Dynarski, 2016; Huelsman, 2015). Additionally, African American graduates started out owing more in student loans than White students. Four years after graduation, they owed almost twice as much as White students averaging \$53,000 of debt (Huelsman, 2015).

Because of the financial pressures facing African American borrowers, they are more likely to drop out, regardless of institution types (Dynarski, 2016; Fernandes, 2017; Huelsman, 2015). More than two-thirds of African American students who did not complete their college degrees cited high costs as the reason (Huelsman, 2015). Therefore, African Americans are more likely to need financial assistance to receive advanced degrees, and research showed that they were approximately five times more likely to default on loan payments than White borrowers (Kitroeff, 2014; Scott-Clayton & Li, 2016). Researchers reported that 19% of African American borrowers defaulted, with another 33% of borrowers at least 90 days delinquent on their payments (Scott-Clayton & Li, 2016).

Some researchers noted one of the reasons for these issues was that African American graduates earned less money out of college, making it more of a financial strain to pay off student loans (Houle & Addo, 2019). White college graduates between ages 21 to 24 typically

earn three dollars more per hour than their African American peers, and sometimes more (Dynarski, 2016; Huelsman, 2015). The racial wealth gap that is the largest and increasing the most rapidly is between White and Black American college students and graduates (Houle & Addo, 2019). These financial strains impact the ability to retain African Americans in colleges and universities and reflect a larger issue of race within the United States that has infiltrated every American aspect of life.

Theoretical Framework: Critical Race Theory

This researcher used the critical race theory (CRT) as the theoretical framework to explore how race and ethnicity impacted educational opportunities, including study abroad. Additionally, this researcher explored institutional responses to African American students' lack of participation in study abroad. Researchers of CRT examined society and culture intersecting with race, power, and law (Goldoni, 2017; Harris, 2012). CRT is useful in recognizing how racism cemented in the United States and how this issue impacts people of color.

Common themes in CRT include that race and racism are inherent in the lives of people of color in the United States, racial power and challenges dominate ideologies, and the expressed importance of social justice supersedes. For this study's purposes, the researcher focused on the effects of racism in the United States on African Americans. Researchers posited that others could use CRT to examine the historical linkages between the patterns of racial oppression and structural inequities in education (Dixson & Anderson, 2018; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Given that inequity issues in study abroad are systemic, widespread, and focused on race, CRT was an ideal framework to utilize for this study.

Discussing the impact that race plays in educational systems is critical to address systemic inequity and examine the notion of scholarship within the United States (Tate, 1997).

Calmore (1992) stated that the role of CRT in education was to legitimize people of color's experiences to show the values and norms contributing to the educational inequity that persisted in the United States. Moreover, Omi and Winant (1994) discussed the critical role that ignorance played in maintaining inequitable systems. An inability to identify or specify many of the underlying educational barriers placed in front of people within the United States aid in the continued omission that there is an issue (McCarthy & Crichtlow, 1993). Therefore, CRT provides a way of utilizing theory to identify and facilitate a "systemic examination of scholarship that addresses ideological influence on the knowledge in curriculum and education practice" (King, 1995, p. 270).

Grounded in stereotypes and characterizations of racial inferiority are the traditional theories and beliefs popular in education for people of color. Some of the earlier educational studies assessing African Americans' intellectual capacity showed that African Americans were intellectually and genetically inferior——referred to as the inferiority paradigm (Carter & Goodwin, 1994; Gould, 1981). Herstein and Murray (1994) blamed people of color and their low levels of intelligence as the cause of educational disparities, reflecting the inherent racism embedded within the foundation of American education. An inability to acknowledge centuries of marginalization and legal oppression of people of color, instead blaming the oppressed, shows people's willingness to ignore the deep-seated bias at the core of the U.S. education system (Spring, 1997).

The tenants of CRT applied to this study include colorblindness, counter-storytelling, and social construction. Colorblindness is the notion that one can be color unconscious, which results in cultural practices and racist ideologies and discourse that maintain White educational spaces, such as studying abroad (Romero & Chin, 2017). Counter-storytelling is used to "counter meta-

narratives of whiteness by challenging dominant paradigms, as well as to analyze, subvert, and intervene in dominant conceptual frameworks that mask oppressive experiences" (Romero & Chin, 2017, p. 34). This tenant also serves to counter stories told throughout history with narratives around lived realities to uncover the truth about access and experiences. Finally, social construction refers to the social construction of race, which is central to constraining people of color within a society (Gillborn, 2015).

Although socially constructed, race is reinforced through everyday practices and social interactions deriving through social thoughts and relations (Christian et al., 2019; Gillborn, 2015). This occurrence is evidenced through seemingly minute microaggressions that are often subtle and unconscious exchanges that show ignorance and prejudice. These microaggressions collectively contribute to racism and racialized individuals' subordination by the dominant culture (Delgado & Stefancic, 2013).

Literature Review

Despite the obstacles for students of color, higher education provides unique opportunities for college and university students (Kasravi, 2009; Talburt & Stewart, 1999). One of these opportunities is to study abroad. With an increasing responsibility to prepare global and well-rounded graduates, leaders of colleges and universities increasingly focused on international education and study abroad (Lewis, 2009; Rhoads & Szelenyi, 2011). There is an expectation that higher education institution leaders facilitate the acquisition of international skills (Bailey Shea, 2009). University leaders met this increasing pace of globalization with new programs and global initiatives to create competitive students prepared for the 21st-century workforce (Bauman et al., 2005).

Leaders of colleges and universities face growing pressures to meet the needs of students in an increasingly globalized world. Therefore, leaders of many liberal arts colleges implemented a study abroad requirement, while leaders of public colleges and universities developed growing initiatives to increase the number of students studying abroad (Bennett, 2001; Gieser, 2015). However, various factors still influence a student's desire or ability to travel abroad.

More than 20 years ago, 84,400 American students who took advantage of an opportunity to study abroad (during the 1994-5 school year); however, more than 60% were women, and more than 85% were White (Talbert & Stewart, 1999). African American students made up only 3% of this group (IIE, 2014; Talbert & Stewart, 1999). According to the IIE (2020), the 2014 through 2015 statistics only changed slightly: 72.9% of the students studying abroad were White, followed by Asians and Hispanic or Latino students with approximately 8% each,,, and Black students comprising 6% of the students studying abroad between 2014 and 2015 (IIE, 2020).

During the 2015 to 2016 school year, 325,339 students participated in study abroad opportunities. Of those students, 65% were women, and more than 70% were White (Wang et al., 2016). Consequently, researchers of studying abroad focused on White, middle-class, female students at four-year institutions (Willis, 2015). According to both the IIE (2014) and the NCES (2011), of all the study abroad students at U.S. postsecondary institutions, White students were overrepresented, making up 60.5% of the study abroad total in 2010. In the 2010–2011 school year, that number increased to 77.8% of the study abroad population (McKinley, 2014), and as of 2015, it decreased to 72.9% (IIE, 2020).

With growing national and institutional attention about the importance of studying abroad and diversifying study abroad participants, African American participation should be more closely examined. It is critical to confront the issue of colorblindness to address unequal

representation in study abroad (Romero & Chin, 2017). By ignoring the lack of diversity in study abroad, the norms and traditional approaches to study abroad that have excluded diverse populations will continue perpetuating White study abroad spaces, practices, and norms (Romero & Chin, 2017).

This researcher highlighted the experiences of African Americans to show the factors influencing the decision to study abroad. Study abroad practitioners should determine how and if African American students' paths to study abroad—and their experiences once they get there—differ from those of the White students who traditionally study abroad (Lörz, Netz, & Quast, 2016; McKinley, 2014). One way to address this issue is with counter-storytelling (Romero & Chin, 2017). By allowing marginalized populations, including African Americans, to share their experiences with studying abroad, practitioners will better understand the narrative of the underrepresented population. This act can provide study abroad administrators with a new framework by which to view their study abroad practices. The makeup of students participating in study abroad should mirror the demographic composition of students in American higher education (Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program, 2005).

Salisbury et al. (2009) and Penn and Tanner (2009) found no statistical differences between African American and White college and high school students' interests in studying abroad opportunities. Of the high school students, Penn and Tanner (2009) found that 83% wanted to participate in a study abroad experience, which belied the notion that the racial gaps in study abroad participation were due to lack of interest. This finding indicated that somewhere between intending to study abroad and studying abroad, some factors inhibited African students' participation.

Experiences of African Americans abroad. Of those students who choose to participate in study abroad, there is limited research on their experiences and how both the social climate at home and the social climate abroad may impact a student's experience (Salisbury et al., 2011). For students who study abroad at a host university or in a host community with an unwelcome social climate, a student may reasonably hesitate to recommend that experience to another student with a similar identity (Sweeney, 2013). For example, an African American student who studied in Argentina described her study abroad experience and stated the following:

I began to realize the stares were because of my skin color, not my nationality. I was a Black woman in Argentina, a country with people of mostly European descent. Anywhere I went I stuck out like a sore thumb ... No one could believe that I was American ... One thing stuck with me that I just could not ignore, why hadn't anyone told me about this before I left (the United States)? (Lewis, 2009, p. 51)

This student was disappointed that she was unprepared and not warned about what she would encounter before her travels abroad (Lewis, 2009).

Craig (2010), Maundeni (2001), Malewski and Phillion (2009), and Marx and Pray (2011) found that African American study abroad participants observed and experienced discomfort, discrimination, and racism due to their races or native origins, which identified them as foreigners. Thus, leaders should ensure African American students' safety while abroad when their experiences could differ drastically from White students. In Stephenson's (1999) study, one participant became a catcalling target while studying in Spain. Talburt and Stewart (1999) reported that two students in Chile faced similar problems and felt uncomfortable when targeted. Another student studying in Italy experienced being perceived as a prostitute by the locals (Woodruff, 2005). These stereotypes faced by African Americans not only impacted their

perceptions of the host country and culture, but it also impacted their study abroad experiences (Goldoni, 2017).

In 1993, the Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE) explored the list of factors influencing underrepresented student participation in study abroad and found that many students were concerned about coping with cultural differences and were afraid of experiencing discrimination. African American students commonly had negative experiences while abroad, showing they were outsiders within their host communities (Goldoni, 2017). Moreover, a lack of preparation for African American students for dealing with discrimination and racism is a recurring theme in the literature, showing that the fear of discrimination is warranted and needs to be addressed before African American students traveling abroad can increase. Negative experiences while traveling abroad can impact study abroad participation and limit students' ability and willingness to interact with host communities and cultures, which can negatively impact learning outcomes (Hurtado, 2002; Talburt & Stewart, 1999).

Study abroad preparedness is a crucial facet of studying abroad. Researchers have suggested that study abroad preparedness was relevant to both access to study abroad and the study abroad experience (Bikos et al., 2019). Regarding access, students with study abroad preparedness feel like they possess the tools and skills necessary to succeed while abroad. In terms of experience, students with study abroad preparedness gain a greater sense of confidence in their abilities to navigate the unknown (Perkins, 2017). Understanding students' self-perceptions of their preparedness can show insights into study abroad inequities. Moreover, study abroad preparedness contributes to interests, intentions, outcome expectations, and goals (Chang, 2012). Awareness of discernable patterns leading to study abroad preparedness can

result in possibilities for interventions that may minimize unequal access to study abroad (Bikos et al., 2019).

Predeparture orientation and cultural awareness preparation are becoming increasingly important for institutional leaders sending students abroad. Highum (2014) stated, "Students who have gone through an orientation process are better prepared to enter into the experience abroad and benefit from it" (p. 51). This finding is related to the body of research showing that unprepared African American students had negative and unsafe experiences while abroad (Craig, 2010; Lewis, 2009; Malewski & Phillion, 2009; Maundeni, 2001; Marx & Pray, 2011; Stephenson, 1999; Talburt & Stewart, 1999).

Moreover, in a study assessing students' perceptions of preparedness to study abroad, one participant stated, "I heard about this program through a friend who told me it was life-changing for her and that the experience of traveling and studying abroad changed her whole outlook on the world" (Bikos et al., 2019, p. 86). If African American students feel unprepared and have negative experiences abroad, they will likely not be positive study abroad promoters, which can adversely affect the number of African American students being encouraged by their peers to study abroad.

This finding showed the importance of study abroad preparedness and support for African American students before they travel abroad. Students with study abroad predeparture preparation can gain the support they need to have a positive and meaningful experience they want to share with others (Highum, 2014). In a multi-institutional, quantitative study by Bikos et al. (2019), 458 participants, 4% of whom identified as African American, noted that they felt ready to study abroad with the help of alumni and peers. Direct contact with individuals who informed them about "what to expect" (Bikos et al., 2019, p. 86) and provided assistance

beginning with the application process, continuing during their time abroad, and lasting after their re-entry into the United States increased the students' feelings of being prepared to study abroad (Bikos et al., 2019).

Participants also mentioned that having peers and alumni help them was inspiring and motivational. They stated that this support was "more helpful than" the help of professional staff members because they could "relate to other students' perspectives" (Bikos et al., 2019, p. 86) because they were similar in age. Families, friends, and acquaintances with international experience were also important resources for students planning to study abroad. These helpers provided students with best practices and cultural information that eased any worries and fears. Therefore, students of color and international students highlighted having family and social connections abroad made them more comfortable with studying abroad (Bikos et al., 2019). The researchers found that participants felt most prepared when they had previous travel experiences abroad or had contact with individuals with previous knowledge and resources on studying abroad (Bikos et al., 2019).

Consequently, a more diverse group of leaders within higher education institutions, specifically the area of education abroad, can result in a deeper understanding and consideration for the needs of diverse students traveling abroad. Steele and Aronson (1995) stated that compositional diversity and having a body of educators more reflective of the student body positively influenced academic achievement. When considering university study abroad offices, most offices, even at minority-serving institutions, are made up of leaders who are not reflective of their student body (Steele & Aronson, 1995). Thus, understanding the importance of compositional diversity and institutional diversity benefits requires intentionality within educational institutions (Gasman, Abiola, & Travers, 2015). However, research on the impact of

study abroad on students of color, particularly African Americans, is limited. Also, the limited participation of African American students in international programs continues to go unaddressed and unnoticed in academia, resulting in disproportionate amounts of African American students being unable to take advantage of opportunities abroad (Comp, 2007; Goldoni, 2017).

Compositional diversity in education. Compositional diversity shows how race impacts educational institutions' makeup. Compositional diversity is "achieved through increasing the proportional representation of racial and ethnic minorities. Also, institutional policies that increase the compositional diversity of an institution indicate that the institution values diversity and its leaders" (Karkouti, 2016, p. 408). In today's higher learning institutions, diversity is considered a transformative tool for leaders of universities to attain their mission and contribute to the betterment of society (Milem, Chang, & Antonio, 2005; Smith & Mrozek, 2016). CRT supports the notion that people of color are reminded of their place within a society based on the racialized subordination experienced within that society. Lack of representation in professional spaces is one example of this racial discrimination and oppression (Gillborn, 2015).

In the 2015-16 school year, there were 3.8 million public school, 1.9 million elementary school, and 1.9 million secondary school teachers (NCES, 2019). Of these teachers, 80% identified as White, 9% as Hispanic, 7% as Black, and 2% as Asian (NCES, 2019). Teachers who identified as American Indian/Alaska Native, Pacific Islander, or two or more races each made up less than 2% of public-school teachers. As of 2017, full-time educators at degree-granting postsecondary institutions were 81% White and 11% Asian/Pacific Islander. Four percent were Black, approximately 3% were Hispanic, and few professors identified as American

Indian/Alaska Native. Those who identified with two or more races made up approximately 1% of full-time faculty.

Higher education institution leaders need to intentionally diversify the racial and ethnic composition of their faculty and staff to prepare college and university students better to participate in a democratic society (Turner et al., 2008). Researchers suggested that an institution's educational richness hinged on the makeup of its faculty, staff, and students (Milem et al., 2005). A diverse faculty and staff can help recruit and retain diverse students (Alger & Carrasco, 2007; Turner et al., 2008). Thus, compositional diversity is significant because it promotes trust between underrepresented students and institutional personnel through their shared experiences (Saha, Guiton, & Wimmers, 2008).

There are educational benefits to diverse learning environments (Kuh, 2009; Milem et al., 2005; Turner et al., 2008). Leaders of institutions can "create robust learning environments, exposes students to a broad array of ideas, experiences, and perspectives" (Saha et al., 2008, p. 1135). Williams, Joseph, and Shederick (2005) also posited that racially and ethnically inclusive learning environments positively impacted students' learning and prepared them to be contributing members of society by exposing them to new ideas and perspectives.

Compositional diversity plays an essential role in student success. According to the NCES (2011), more than 84% of K-12 teachers identified as Caucasian, 85% identified as female, and only 22% stated that they were under the age of 30 (Feistritz, 2011). Almost a decade later, there is little change in the demographics of U.S. educators. By 2042, more than 42% of all American elementary and high school students will belong to an underrepresented population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008, 2011; U.S. Department of Commerce, 2011). Those diverse students will then enter postsecondary institutions. Given the dearth of educators of color

at the K-12 level, similar patterns persist in postsecondary education, leading to a continued lack of representation across educational institutions and institutional levels.

Addressing the importance of diversifying the composition of both educators and students is essential, requiring institutional leaders to implement new strategies that maximize the educational benefits of diversity while allowing students of all races to shape the social system (Karkouti, 2013; Onorato, 2013). By utilizing a CRT lens to examine the institutional and cultural intersection of racial power and dominant ideologies, institution leaders can challenge their exclusionary practices (Goldoni, 2017; Harris, 2012). Therefore, a better understanding of racism's impact and intrinsic nature within the U.S. educational institutions must be addressed to create inclusive learning environments.

Conclusion

African American students are at a significant disadvantage within the U.S. education system. Although systematic and educational efforts are made to provide equity, an inherent system of unequal access to resources remains. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) highlighted the importance of the role of race in the United States and stated that *raced* education (i.e., the way race impacted the U.S. education system) should be understood and explained. In doing so, educators need to consider educational omissions and blind spots (McCarthy & Crichlow, 1993). These racial and educational inequities limit African American students' abilities to partake in educational experiences that require a significant financial investment. This subject is reflective in study abroad participation and the financial investment that study abroad requires.

Applying CRT to determine how to best approach these issues of inequity can provide a new way to assess the U.S. education system and allow educators a new perspective on the issues impacting students within the education system (King, 1995). This synthesis of literature showed

a foundation to explore the factors that impacted African American students in their pursuit of international education. To situate this study on inequity in study abroad, the researcher conducted a needs assessment to identify the factors that impacted students' intent to study abroad and determined whether there was a relationship between these factors and how prepared students felt to study abroad.

The present study is organized with five chapters. Chapter 1 introduced the topic of the study and the theoretical frame of CRT. The second chapter introduces the purpose, research questions, and the methodology utilized to conduct the needs assessment, including the sampling techniques and procedures used to collect the data. Chapter 3 offers a literature review of the literature of the relevant qualitative data and the phenomenological approach while building a case for using the phenomenological method for this study. The fourth chapter describes the research design and evaluation method proposed for this study, while the final chapter discusses the results and the implications for future practices, research, and policies.

Chapter 2: Context of the Problem of Practice and Needs Assessment

An empirical needs assessment was conducted to understand better the influential factors guiding students' decisions to study abroad. The overarching issue was that African American students were not studying abroad at rates comparable to White students (Redden, 2010). This gap in study abroad participation was a problem that required further investigation.

As reviewed in the previous chapter, many factors influence participation in studying abroad for African American and White students alike, including cost, lack of knowledge about study abroad, and academic implications while abroad (Redden, 2010; Wang et al., 2016). Through the lens of CRT, systemic racism significantly impacts access to educational resources for African American students more than any other ethnic group, contributing to persistent educational inequities within the United States. Without these resources, African American students lack the necessary tools needed to navigate educational opportunities successfully, particularly study abroad, leaving them unprepared (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Penn & Tanner, 2009).

The empirical needs assessment outlined in this chapter shows insights into the various factors that study abroad students highlight as impacting their decisions to study abroad. Specifically, the needs assessment explores the factors that serve as barriers and the resources students need to commit to studying abroad. This chapter reviews the needs assessment conducted by the researcher and examines the needs assessment findings.

This needs assessment aimed to understand better the problem of practice and contextualize the literature guiding this study. Subsequently, data were collected from study abroad students evaluating their decisions to study abroad and study abroad preparedness. The researcher utilized a convenience sample. Due to a lack of African American students studying

abroad, only those who identified as White and Latin(x) participated in the needs assessment sample. The absence of African American students in the convenience sample showed the low number of African American students studying abroad and the need for greater insight into why this problem persisted.

Statement of Purpose

Guided by the observed lack of diverse representation within the researcher's professional context, the needs assessment showed insights into factors contributing to gaps in study abroad participation. The research questions were grounded in the two main factors noted in the literature as influencing students' decisions to study abroad: cost of study abroad and lack of information about study abroad (Fry & Brux, 2009; Kasravi, 2009; Penn & Tanner, 2009).

Research indicates that most students who studied abroad were middle to upper class (Sweeney, 2013). However, in Raby's (2006) study of community colleges, 70% of participants noted that cost alone was not enough of a deterrent to prevent them from studying abroad. Kasravi (2009) also found that although affordability was noted by both students who chose to study abroad and those who did not as an important factor, students who studied abroad found ways to overcome these financial barriers. This finding indicated that finances were not guiding students' decisions to study abroad.

Additionally, a study of 2,772 first-year college students across 19 institutions showed that African American and White students alike were interested in the opportunity to study abroad (Salisbury et al., 2009). Although researchers supported that both African American and White students were interested in studying abroad, those who studied abroad were not reflective of this finding. Researchers posited that lack of information about studying abroad and lack of

communication about studying abroad opportunities were significant inhibitors to African American students studying abroad (Bakalis & Joiner, 2004; Rudy & Godwin, 1989).

This dissonance between interest and information could be the deciding factor for students who chose not to study abroad. Without access to African American students, the researcher collected data from the study abroad students available and gleaned information regarding the resources needed to feel prepared to study abroad and their decisions to study abroad. This needs assessment answered the following research questions:

RQ1: What factors influence a student's decision to study abroad?

RQ2: To what extent did students feel prepared to study abroad?

The first question allowed for a deeper dive into the barriers that students faced when deciding to study abroad. The second question allowed students to reflect on their feeling prepared for their experiences studying abroad.

Method and Procedures

This section shows the qualitative research conducted for the needs assessment. This section also includes the (a) research design, (b) participant information, data collection, (d) data analysis, and (e) interpretation of the findings. Through semi-structured interviews, the participants provided details of their study abroad readiness and experiences when deciding to study abroad. These data provided the researcher with insights into the essential resources needed for students to decide to study abroad and the barriers many students faced when deciding whether to study abroad.

Participants. This study's participants included 10 study abroad students enrolled at a large, public university in the southeast. This institution was referred to as the alias, the Southeastern University, throughout this study. The participants were identified through

convenience sampling and recruited via an announcement made at a weekly meeting. The students' advisor requested that all interested participants should stay after the meeting to sign up for the study. All students who signed up received information regarding the study's details and could select an interview timeslot. All 10 of the students who signed up chose to participate in the study. However, participation in the study was optional.

Of the 10 participants, 70% identified as female, and 30% identified as male. Ninety percent of the participants were White, 10% identified as Hispanic/Latin(x), and 0% were African American. All participants were in their junior years of college at the Southeastern University and studying abroad in Antwerp, Belgium. All demographic data were given to the researcher at the start of the semester abroad within her role at the Southeastern University as the study abroad program coordinator.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Demographics	Percentage of students
Male	30%
Female	70%
White	90%
Hispanic/Latin(x)	10%
African American	0%
Junior (Class Year)	100%

Instrumentation and measures. Collecting data via semi-structured interviews provided answers to the research questions. The interview questions' content was adapted from the Southeastern University's pre and post departure assessment. This assessment was provided to all study abroad students at the Southeastern University. To participate in study abroad, these students went through a selection process where their grade point averages, university judicial records, and study abroad admissions applications were reviewed to determine eligibility. From there, the program director selected the most qualified students, and others were placed on a

waiting list according to eligibility. Ideally, the most qualified academically and most well-rounded students were selected to participate in the study abroad program.

The semi-structured interviews took 30 minutes to complete and showed study abroad preparedness by asking students to reflect on the factors that influenced their study abroad decision-making. The interviews provided data needed to measure the specified constructs. Table 2 outlines the operational definitions and measures used to address and define each construct in the needs assessment.

Table 2

Constructs, Operational Definitions, and Measures

Construct	Operational definition	Measure
Preparedness	A person's belief that they have the skills and resources needed to successfully navigate the study abroad process and participate in study abroad	Semi-Structured Interview Items (Ex: "Did you feel prepared to study abroad before getting to Belgium?"; "What resources helped you prepare for your study abroad experience?")
Study Abroad Influencers	Factors influencing a students' decision of whether they will study abroad	"Were there things you needed to consider when deciding to study abroad?"

Measuring constructs. The students answered questions on their preparedness to study abroad to measure their understanding of the skills and resources needed to navigate the study abroad process and participate in study abroad successfully... These interview questions included the following: Did you feel prepared to study abroad before getting to Belgium, and what resources helped you get ready for your study abroad experience? Factors influencing a students' decision to participate in study abroad were evaluated via interviews. To determine study abroad influencers, participants answered questions, such as the following: Were there any obstacles you or anyone you knew had to overcome to study abroad; what were they; do you know other

people who wanted to study abroad but were unable to; and if so, what were the reasons why they were unable to study abroad?

Data Collection

Utilizing convenience sampling, semi-structured interviews established a structure for the interview while allowing for a natural flow of follow-up questions and participants' opportunities to elaborate on thoughts and ideas (see Turner, 2010). Using in vivo coding, the researcher conducted a thematic analysis of the qualitative data. This process used words or phrases from participants to identify codes.

Notes were taken to summarize participants' responses (see Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). The interviewer notes summarized participant responses and showed specific phrases that participants used to describe study abroad preparedness and barriers impacting their decisions to study abroad. Beginning with a thorough assessment of the interview notes, the researcher carefully documented all references to the students' feelings of preparedness or lack thereof regarding studying abroad. Any factors influencing their decisions to study abroad, including verbal cues on family, social or financial factors impacting the decision to study abroad, and feeling prepared to study abroad were noted.

Qualitative researchers offer insights into the why of a phenomenon and provide details into participants' experiences (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2017). Utilizing the process of in vivo coding, keywords and phrases reflecting the participants' perceptions were noted, and codes were developed to represent students' commonly conveyed sentiments and expressions. After noting all the possible codes, the researcher decided on the preliminary codes, which showed the most frequently expressed phrases and ideas. The researcher then used those codes to code all interview notes. After identifying the initial codes and applying axial coding, the researcher then

examined all the data, combining and separating key terms into various categories and determining connections between the various codes to establish a theme (see Creswell & Miller, 2000).

The university utilized for this study was recognized as one of the top master-level institutions in the country for study-abroad participation by the IIE's (2020) Open Doors report. The IIE (2020) is a leading not-for-profit educational and cultural exchange organization in the United States, which assesses study abroad participation. The university ranked first in the nation in participation in short-term programs, which lasted several weeks in length—second in the nation in the total number of students studying abroad.

This institution was a public, former teachers college, and it ranked second-best public school in the south (U.S. News & World Report, 2016). With approximately 23,000 students, 60% of whom were female and 75% of whom were White, the study abroad participants were predominantly White women (see U.S. News & World Report, 2017). Tables 3 and 4 outline the institutional demographics. With students of color making up approximately 22% of the student body, less than 6% of those studying abroad at the Southeastern University were students of color (U.S. News & World Report, 2017). Of the 10 needs assessment participants, 70% were women, and 90% were White. At this institution, the average student studying abroad paralleled U.S. national patterns.

Although many young White women explore international opportunities, other groups, specifically underrepresented students, are left behind. Of the 1,476 students who studied abroad at the Southeastern University between 2016 and 2017, 60% were female, and 84.5% were White. Considering the Antwerp Study Abroad program, between 2% and 6% of Antwerp students each semester were Hispanic/Latino or Asian. However, of the more than 400 students

who participated in the program between September 2014 and December 2018, none identified as African American, American Indian/Alaskan Native, or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander. This disparity showed the issue of diverse representation in studying abroad, prompting the researcher's interest in the future examination of the factors that could influence this lack of participation for African American students.

Table 3

The Southeastern University Enrollment

Category	Number of students	Percentage of students
Enrollment	23,000	
In-State	17,480	76
Out-of-State	5,520	24
Male	9,200	40
Female	13,800	60
Students of color	5,060	22
International Students	460	2

Table 4

The Southeastern University Ethnic Breakdown

Ethnic breakdown	Approximate number of students	Percentage of students
White	17,250	75
Hispanic/Latin(x)	1,380	6
African American	1,150	5
Asian	1,150	5
Two or More Races	920	4
American Indian/Alaska Native	< 230	< 1
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	< 230	< 1
Not identified	920	4

Data Analysis and Findings

In vivo and axial coding were employed to code the data, and four codes were identified (see Miles et al., 2013). The codes were familial factors (FAM), social factors (SOC), financial factors (FIN), and preparedness (PREP). Using a thematic network approach, as identified by Attride-Stirling (2001), common excerpts and ideas from the interviewer notes were reviewed to create a coding theme (Table 5).

Table 5

Codebook: Themes, Codes, Definitions, and Supporting Excerpts

Theme	Codes	Definitions	Supporting excerpts
Familial Factors impacting students' decision to study abroad	FAM	How views, opinions, and thoughts of those within a student's family influence their decision to study abroad.	<p>"My mom was very supportive of my decision to study abroad."</p> <p>"My sister studied abroad before in Spain."</p> <p>"My parents were afraid that something bad would happen to me while I was abroad, and they would not be there to help me."</p>
Social Factors impacting students' decision to study abroad	SOC	How views, opinions, and thoughts of those within a student's community or immediate social surroundings influence their decision to study abroad.	<p>"I knew I would miss out on being able to join the sorority I wanted until the following year."</p> <p>"I had really worked hard to dominate in intramurals this year, so I needed to decide if I wanted to miss the season to study abroad."</p>
Financial Factors impacting students' decision to study abroad	FIN	How financial responsibilities influence a student's decision to study abroad.	<p>"I had several friends who weren't able to study abroad because they couldn't afford it."</p> <p>"I am very fortunate to have parents who are willing to support me while I am here."</p> <p>"I had to work all summer and on-campus to save up enough to be able to come here..."</p>
Preparedness	PREP	How prepared a student feels to navigate the study abroad process and studying abroad.	<p>"I knew all about everything here in Antwerp because my Big (sorority Big Sister) told me everything I needed to know before I got here. She studied here last year."</p> <p>"I had a friend who studied abroad who was able to tell me a bunch of stuff and all that I needed to do. So, I was good to go."</p>

The data showed that social, familial, and financial factors influenced students' decisions to study abroad. Students who connected to someone with study abroad or international experience felt more prepared to study abroad. Factors, such as how family members felt about studying and traveling abroad, friend and community member views on studying abroad, the financial responsibility of studying abroad, and resources available to guide students through the study abroad process, all influenced study-abroad preparedness and intent to study abroad.

This section shows the findings from the 10 participants in the semi-structured interviews. The needs-assessment confirmed study-abroad literature, highlighting financial barriers and lack of information as two key factors impacting a student's ability to study abroad (Fry & Brux, 2009; Kasravi, 2009; Penn & Tanner, 2009). Additionally, noted were social and academic influencers involved when deciding to study abroad. The research questions organized the research findings, and the codes and themes showed that students relied heavily on someone who could guide them through the study abroad process. This guidance helped them feel more prepared to study abroad and provided them with resources needed to study abroad.

Question 1: What factors influence a student's decision to study abroad? The following interview questions were asked to answer the first research question: Were there any obstacles you or anyone you knew had to overcome to study abroad, why were you initially interested in study abroad, and did you face any challenges when you were deciding whether or not to study abroad? The common themes that emerged from the qualitative data collected included the importance of familial and community influences on students' decisions to study abroad. Financing study abroad was also a typical concern for those who mentioned friends who wanted to study abroad and could not study abroad. One student "saved (her) money every summer for the last three years to be able to afford the semester abroad." Although this comment reflected a great sacrifice for the study abroad experience, it showed the limitations for students contributing to their families financially, being unable to set funds aside to save for a global experience.

Question 2: To what extent do students feel prepared to study abroad? To answer the second research question, students were asked if they "were prepared to study abroad," "had someone to help them through the study abroad process," and if they "knew anyone else who

studied abroad before deciding to study abroad." These data showed that 70% of participants decided to study abroad because they connected to someone who guided them through the study abroad process. This connection ranged from family members who had studied abroad, friends, or students in similar organizations on campus who had gone on their specific study abroad program, to parents with a plethora of international experience who could advise them on preparing for studying abroad.

These findings indicated that informal methods of support or guidance concerning study abroad influenced study abroad preparedness and decision making. However, one should have a relationship with someone knowledgeable about studying abroad to gain individualized guidance through the study abroad process. With college campuses lacking compositional diversity in the classroom and within study abroad offices (Karkouti, 2016; Steele & Aronson, 1995), low numbers of African American peers studied abroad (McHan, 2019), with a lack of knowledge about the benefits of study abroad (Penn & Tanner, 2009); this finding had grave implications for African Americans students.

Harris (2012) used CRT to suggest that race and power could significantly impact access. Without the power to address the institutionalized racist practices that limit marginalized students from accessing opportunities like studying abroad, it is unlikely that changes will be made to provide more equitable opportunities. Granting African American students with direct access to study abroad resources can be vital in increasing their exposure to studying abroad, causing them to feel knowledgeable and ready to study abroad. Therefore, providing intentional means of addressing this more formally is essential.

CRT lens offered a more in-depth look into the underlying practices limiting African American students from accessing resources, knowledge, and relationships that could influence

their study abroad decisions. Understanding the inherent racial bias within higher education institutions within the United States showed a backdrop as to why there were little overarching efforts to change this educational gap (see Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). With study abroad departments primarily serving White students made up of White administrators and reinforcing practices that appealed to a White audience, understanding African American students' needs and experiences must be addressed by transformational leaders genuinely interested in enhancing diversity and tackling exclusionary practices (Karkouti, 2016). Highlighting the impact of the disparity and its implications is the first step in rectifying the issue.

Limitations

One limitation of the sample was that it was made up primarily of White students, and the problem of practice highlighted the needs of African American students. Therefore, none of the needs assessment sample participants were viable candidates for further participation in this study. Moreover, although the needs assessment did not provide data reflecting the African American student's voices, the lack of their voices spoke volumes. The needs assessment findings showed White and Latin(x) participant needs, like those reflected in literature for African American students (Lewis, 2009; Salisbury et al., 2011). However, despite the similarities, there were differences in study abroad experiences based on ethnicity, impacting participation in study abroad (see Dolby, 2004; Gieser, 2015; Goldoni, 2017). These factors also impacted motivation and access to study abroad (Kronholz & Osborn, 2016).

CRT provided insights into the systemic issues at play. Although White and African American students' needs were similar, White students had the resources needed to overcome study abroad barriers, while African American students did not gain the same resources. Thus,

one should understand the role race plays in generating inequities in international education (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

Historically, African Americans were denied equal access to educational benefits and resources (Dixson & Anderson, 2018; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). The racial gap in study abroad participation could lead to much more significant gaps in employability, wealth, and higher education retention. Leaders should understand the impact of race and racism to guide their institutional decisions, policies, and practices (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Currently, dominant ideologies leave African American students disadvantaged. These ideologies impact institutional responses to inequities or lack thereof (Dixson & Anderson, 2018).

Another limitation was the small sample utilized in the needs assessment. This small sample limited the study's generalizability (see Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2017). Also, with all students enrolled at the same institution and attending the same study abroad program, their specific needs might not reflect other students' needs with varying characteristics. One must note these limitations, although such issues did not negate this needs assessment's overall findings.

Threats to Validity

History. Because all participants were within one cohort of study abroad students, this issue could have influenced their opinions, and the responses might lack authenticity (see Shaddish, Cook, & Campbell, 2009). This threat was also prominent when one event impacted an entire group. Because this participant group studied and lived together each day that they were abroad, the likelihood of an event impacting the group increased.

Maturation. Because all students experienced studying abroad utilizing their unique lens and worldview, it was expected that the respondents' responses might differ depending on how their experiences abroad had impacted them. For example, students who might be growing

homesick the longer they were abroad might have more negative responses that did not address specific positives or negatives of their experiences abroad. Therefore, awareness of culture shock's impact was necessary for the researcher (see Redden, 2010).

Conclusion

In summary, understanding the factors impacting students' decision to study abroad and students' feeling prepared to study abroad is essential to address inequity in studying abroad. The implications of these findings indicated the need for developing programs or partnerships to mitigate studying abroad barriers to support students throughout the study abroad process. This support could also positively impact study abroad participation, with students overcoming the obstacles hindering them from participating in studying abroad. Future researchers should consider interventions for the problem of practice to support African American students and mitigate barriers to studying abroad.

Chapter 3: Review of Literature

The purpose of this needs assessment was to understand factors influencing a student's decision to study abroad. Additionally, this needs assessment study highlighted the extent to which students feel prepared to study abroad. Highlighting participants' voices showed their study abroad experiences and the factors influencing that experience.

This chapter explores qualitative research approaches, specifically the hermeneutic qualitative phenomenological methodology. The hermeneutic qualitative phenomenological methodology is also known as the interpretive perspective in phenomenology and centers on interpreting experiences to show how those who live through specific experiences understand them. Additionally, the researcher conducts a literature review to outline the research of studying abroad and the African American experience. By conducting an extensive review of qualitative and phenomenological approaches, the researcher builds the case for using this study's phenomenological method.

The researcher examines the literature intersecting study abroad and African Americans to explore African Americans' study abroad experiences. An extensive review of the literature on study abroad intent for African Americans, factors influencing African American participation in study abroad, and African Americans' experiences while abroad is essential. This review of the literature is organized based on these major categories.

As supported by the needs assessment, the problem of practice addressed in this study is that African American students are not studying abroad at rates comparable to White students. Many factors may influence students' decisions to study abroad, such as financial obligations, social influences, and knowledge of studying abroad (Burkart, Hexter, & Thompson, 2001). This

researcher aimed to better understand African Americans' experiences studying abroad and the factors that influenced their decisions to study abroad and study abroad preparedness.

Needs Assessment Overview

Chapter 2 outlines the needs assessment to examine the factors that influenced study abroad participation and preparedness. The study participants consisted of 10 study abroad students studying in Antwerp, Belgium. The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews to answer the following two research questions:

RQ1: What factors influence a student's decision to study abroad?

RQ2: To what extent do students feel prepared to study abroad?

The needs assessment findings indicated that students who had someone inform them of studying abroad felt more prepared to study abroad. Additional factors that influenced their decision to study abroad included financial requirements, social pressures, and familial acceptance. When answering the first research question, most participants noted that family and community approval, support, and guidance were critical to their decisions and abilities to study abroad. Most students also noted that they strongly considered the financial implications for studying abroad before they could commit to participating in their semester abroad. Several participants also noted being "fortunate" to study abroad and having friends who could not make the financial commitment.

The second research question showed students' preparedness to study abroad, which, for this study, was defined as how prepared a student felt to navigate the study abroad process while studying abroad. The findings indicated that most students felt prepared to study abroad because they had a relationship with a family member, peer, or community member who guided them

through the study abroad process. These informal means of support were essential to students' decisions to study abroad and feeling prepared to study abroad.

Both the needs assessment and literature confirmed that White and African American students needed study abroad resources, support, and guidance. Due to underlying systemic disparities, African American students' needs were not met for international education, leading to inequitable access to study abroad. Institutional power structures within education further underpinned the notion that being White was more valuable and important than being a person of color (see Patton, McEwen, Rendón, & Howard-Hamilton, 2007).

Given the central role that race plays in this research study, critical race theory serves as the theoretical framework through which the study's context is examined. CRT highlights the racism inherent in the lives of people of color in the United States, offering insights into the intersection of race, educational equity, and study abroad. The ingrained, systemic racism permeating the American educational system has influenced African American students' participation in studying abroad.

CRT grew from lawyers, law professors, and students actively working against racial inequity in legal systems, philosophies, and education (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). CRT built on existing legal scholarship and created a forum for new ways of thinking about the interactions of race, gender, law, society, economics, and various other fields (Crenshaw, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Regarding the impact of race in education, there is common ground and understanding in the discussion, ensuring that all stakeholders build from the same foundation.

There are several components of CRT accepted as common knowledge: (a) Racial inequality is systemic; (b) everyday perpetuations of inequity are integrated into the foundation of social institutions; (c) racial inequity is foundational to the U.S. economic, social, and political

systems; and (d) eliminating intentional racism cannot erase racial inequity from racist systems (Romero & Chin, 2017). Researchers of CRT also posit that no one has a single identity. Everyone exists at the intersection of culture, class, and gender, along with other identifiers (Gillborn, 2015). Also, race is socially constructed and opposes colorblindness or postracialism (Gillborn, 2015).

Literature Review

The needs assessment shows literature regarding the most critical factors influencing students' decisions to study abroad and study abroad preparedness. These factors include social and familial influences and acceptance, financial implications of study abroad, and study abroad preparedness. The following subsection outlines the literature around these factors and how each influences African American students.

Factors influencing study abroad. Some researchers suggest that of the factors impacting college and university students' participation in studying abroad, students reported two key factors as most significant when selecting a study abroad program: cost and access to information and resources (Fry & Brux, 2009; Salisbury et al., 2009, 2011). Although the literature showed support for the same factors being most important to African American and White learners alike, Fry and Brux (2009) utilized a mixed-methods approach to assess the reasons associated with low participation in studying abroad for 363 students of color. Through a survey and focus groups, the researchers found that lack of information and support, limited study abroad programs, financial restraints, and family concerns prevented students of color from participating in studying abroad (Brux & Fry, 2009). CRT showed how African Americans had historically been excluded from educational opportunities. This pattern continues as support of

studying abroad and students' needs remain unequal, leaving more opportunities for students who can find support (Tate, 1997).

The CIEE (1993) confirmed these findings through various studies, conferences, and analyses, showing that, for African American students, financial factors, academic requirements, lack of information, and lack of support were significant barriers. In 1993, the CIEE expanded its list of barriers to include fear of discrimination and cultural differences as factors contributing to the lack of diverse participation in study abroad. Considering the patterns of racial discrimination and oppression within the United States, CRT shows why students may assume that other countries face similar racist principles and can be afraid to confront discrimination abroad (Harris, 2012).

Salisbury et al. (2011) used a longitudinal, quantitative design to investigate study abroad intents for 6,828 White, African American, Asian-American, and Hispanic students at 53 four- and two-year institutions. The authors sought to answer why there was such homogeneity among students who studied abroad (Salisbury et al., 2011). The researchers assessed the factors that influenced a student's intent to study abroad and how this intent differed among White, African American, Asian American, and Hispanic students (Salisbury et al., 2011). The authors found significant differences regarding the intent to study abroad among all groups, including variation among the students of color based on differing measures of cultural, social, human, and financial capital (Salisbury et al., 2011).

Financial factors. Despite the variation across populations, students must consider several factors when deciding to study abroad. One such factor pertains to the financial obligation of studying abroad. Although many students noted this issue, given the financial burden that higher education places on African American students, the additional burden of paying for studying

abroad is often insurmountable. Therefore, organization leaders, such as those from the IIE (2014), created scholarships and travel grants for studying abroad and developed short-term study abroad programs through private donors (Sweeney, 2013).

An institution's ability to access funds for students is also critical to educational opportunities. At institutions where faculty, staff, and administrators are unaware of funding sources for students, students' awareness is limited of said opportunities. Institutional collaboration across departments can also influence educational access and highlight institutional priorities (Karkouti, 2016). However, changing learning outcomes and institutional culture does not happen without intentionality and transformational leadership (Karkouti, 2016; Onorato, 2013).

Leaders of institutions, such as the State University of New York at Oswego, targeted institutional grants for students of color and other underrepresented students to address the financial issues influencing participation in studying abroad (Hulfstrand, 2016). At San Francisco (SF) State University, students pay their SF State tuition and can use all their financial aid award money to fund their study abroad experiences (Hulfstrand, 2016). In 2010, other organizations, such as the Fund for Education Abroad, launched grants and scholarships of up to \$10,000 for students of color and other underrepresented groups to increase and diversify the population of students earning college credits abroad (Hulfstrand, 2016; Lebold et al., 2005).

Additionally, study abroad advisers at SF State combine advice on financial planning throughout the study abroad application process to promote various scholarship opportunities (Hulfstrand, 2016). SF State advisers have also created low-cost exchange programs by partnering with international institutions (Hulfstrand, 2016). The assistant director of the SF State Office of International Programs underscored, "Through these efforts study abroad is often

less expensive than studying in San Francisco," making it "accessible to lower-income students" (Hulfstrand, 2016, p. 56). These initiatives focusing on minimizing the cost of international education resulted in more diverse students studying abroad at these institutions (Hulfstrand, 2016). Although these initiatives resulted in increased participation in studying abroad by underrepresented students, many institution leaders lack the support or access to the resources needed to lower study abroad costs. Therefore, finding solutions that work within their organizational and fiscal structure is critical.

African Americans are more likely to have lower income levels, and their children who go to college are more likely to require financial aid in the form of loans, which increases the wealth gap. Research shows that African Americans' annual earnings are the lowest of all ethnic groups; African Americans receive more federal aid to fund their education than any other group, and the racial wealth gap between college-educated White Americans and African Americans continues to increase (Houle & Addo, 2019; Kitroeff, 2014; Scott-Clayton & Li, 2016). Some researchers have also found that students who use student loans to fund their college education are less likely to participate in study abroad (Whatley, 2017). Given that students receiving financial aid are typically experience greater financial need, it is possible that taking on the additional expense of study abroad is not possible for these students. Addressing this issue from a critical race perspective addresses the inherent financial inequities built into the education system (King, 1995). By confronting the systemic barriers that African Americans face to obtain the opportunities afforded to White students, educators will be better positioned to meet the needs of diverse populations for studying abroad.

Participation and intent. Day-Vines, Barker, and Exum (1998) explored the impact of studying in West Africa on 18 African American students. The researchers utilized Phinney's

model of adolescent ethnic identity development and natural inquiry qualitative methodology. In 2009, Penn and Tanner conducted a quantitative study where they disseminated an 18-question survey to 52 high school graduates enrolled in a 6-week college preparatory program on the campus of an HBCU located in Texas. The researchers examined the participants' demographics, including race, socioeconomic status, intended university major, desire to travel abroad, and desired travel abroad destination.

Day-Vines et al.'s (1998) findings showed that the excursion to West Africa helped African American students dispel myths about Africa, experience liberating and inspirational connections to their heritage, and compare Western and African values, resulting in psychosocial development, ethnic identity development, and increased academic achievement. Similarly, Penn and Tanner's (2009) findings indicated that Black students were aware of the benefits of study abroad and were interested in traveling to locations more aligned with their racial heritage. This mirrors White students' experience, whom researchers suggest align their travel abroad with that of their ancestry (Dolby, 2004; Gieser, 2015). With limited study abroad programs, including limited programs on the African continent, African American students cannot participate in the heritage trips that drive many students' interests in study abroad.

In 2011, Salisbury et al. conducted a 3-year study by collecting data from 2,772 first-year, full-time students at 19 four- and two-year institutions utilizing a longitudinal dataset. The researchers found a significant relationship among race, gender, socioeconomic status, and intent to study abroad (Salisbury et al., 2011). Financial capital also significantly influenced intent to study abroad, with women from lower-income families 11.7% less likely to intend to study abroad than those from higher-income families (Salisbury et al., 2011). This study showed that

implementing support systems could help students overcome the obstacles hindering them from participating in study abroad.

In summary, understanding the factors impacting students' decisions to study abroad and students' feeling prepared to study abroad is essential to address inequity in studying abroad. The implications of these findings indicate that developing programs to mitigate study abroad barriers and support students through the study abroad process can positively impact study abroad participation. Future researchers should consider interventions of the problem of practice to support African American students and decrease barriers to studying abroad.

Characteristics of Qualitative Research

The qualitative methodology was used to explore the study abroad experience of African Americans. A qualitative researcher offers an in-depth exploration of the experiences of a small population of individuals (Creswell, 2014). By using this methodology, the researcher applied a logical system to analyze and synthesize the essence of a particular experience, which, for this study, was studying abroad (see Moustakas, 1994). This method was important to research specific populations when a particular phenomenon was limited, as with research focusing on the intersection of studying abroad and African Americans (see Neuman, 2005; Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

The focus on amplifying participant voices, describing and representing individual experiences, and underscoring personal meaning made qualitative research appropriate for this research study (see Creswell, 2007; Neuman, 2005). Qualitative data offer rich descriptions and details unavailable with quantitative research (Newman, 2005). A quantitative design provides numeric data beneficial with larger sample sizes but with minimal insights to support inferences

and interpretations with small samples (Creswell, 2007). The small sample size of this study made the quantitative method unfitting.

The qualitative method employed in this study is the phenomenological methodology. This method provides rich descriptions of African Americans' experiences as they detail their lived experiences of study abroad. Other methodologies can be used to explore African Americans and study abroad. For example, a case study can show detailed insights around a specific event, population, and activity; however, it is limited in its ability to provide in-depth detail of lived experiences (McMillan, 2004). Also, because this study offered participants an opportunity to detail their past experiences, observing their time abroad as it unfolded over time was impossible—a typical characteristic of case study research (Creswell, 2005).

Ethnography is another qualitative approach where researchers explore the “cultural patterns and everyday practices and perspectives” of specific populations (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017, p. 111). Ethnographers typically spend extended time studying and using observations, interviews, and other analyses to understand the nature of the culture (McMillan, 2004). Although considered for this study, an ethnography was not pertinent given the time constraints of this study. Additionally, ethnographic studies would typically occur within a natural setting, which was not possible in this case. For example, doing so could involve traveling with students abroad while shadowing and observing them. Then, the researcher could observe students' experiences abroad firsthand; however, given the limitations of this study, including an international pandemic limiting travel for study abroad, this process was impossible for this study (see Lochmiller & Lester, 2017). Ethnographies also identify cultural patterns and everyday practices, which was not the focus of this study (McMillan, 2004).

Grounded theory is another qualitative approach that provides meaningful, theoretical insights into various frameworks (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Researchers of a grounded theoretical approach either develop or generate a theory based on a specific dataset (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017; McMillan, 2004). Rather than utilizing an existing theory, grounded theorists explore a process by studying how people make sense of a process (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017). These researchers do not offer explanations of human behavior or experiences (Glaser & Strauss, 1999; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Therefore, grounded theory was not fitting in this case because the goal of this study was not to explain a process, theory, or practice, which is typically the aim of grounded theory research (see Creswell, 2005).

Like phenomenology, narrative researchers conduct extensive data collection via in-depth interviews with participants to explore their experiences with a specific phenomenon (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017). In addition to interviews, narrative researchers can also include data collected through written communications and photos (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017). Drawing on various disciplines, narrative researchers explore participants' stories and learn from those stories to draw meanings from experiences (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017).

Phenomenological approach. Phenomenological research is founded in philosophy and designed to highlight participants' lived experiences (Peoples, 2021). Phenomenological research significantly contrasts other qualitative approaches, and its grounding in philosophy sets it apart from other methodologies. The two most often used perspectives of phenomenology include descriptive phenomenology and hermeneutic phenomenology. Descriptive phenomenologists focus on intentionality and identifying the pure essence of a phenomenon (Peoples, 2021), while hermeneutic phenomenologists attempt to understand the lived experiences of individuals (Wojar & Swanson, 2007).

Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) is considered the founder of phenomenology and the descriptive phenomenological approach (Neubauer, Witkop, & Varpio, 2019; Peoples, 2021; Wojar & Swanson, 2007). Husserl (1913) focused on the consciousness of human experiences and believed that “consciousness was the condition of all human experience” (McMillan, 2004, p. 43). Husserl (1913) strove to understand the “pure essence” (Peoples, 2021, p. 30) of a phenomenon to explain the process of overcoming personal judgments and biases. Husserl (1913) believed that biases and subjectivities hindered a researcher’s ability to explore a phenomenon and “see the phenomenon as it really is” (Peoples, 2021, p. 72).

Husserl (1913) identified a process known as *bracketing* as one way of intentionally addressing researcher bias and dispelling preconceptions. Bracketing is a process where the researcher will invite a colleague familiar with the phenomenon of interest to interview them and identify the areas of judgment and possible bias around the phenomenon (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017). The goal of bracketing is to help researchers set aside biases once identified (Peoples, 2021). Husserl's (1913) findings around consciousness, intentionality, and awareness morphed into a new philosophy and a new approach to scientific inquiry (Moran, 2000; Peoples, 2021).

Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) diverged from Husserl’s (1913) philosophy to create the hermeneutic phenomenological approach (Peoples, 2017). An essential difference between Husserl (1913) and Heidegger’s (1962) approach is the significance of context and its influence. Where context was considered negligible to Husserl’s (1913) approach, it was an essential facet of Heidegger’s (1962) approach (Campbell, 2001; Draucker, 1999; Geanellos, 1998; Orbanic, 1999). Heidegger (1962) was a skeptical of the notion of suspending biases and judgments; however, he believed it essential to understand the essence of a phenomenon (Peoples, 2021).

In response to this skepticism, he developed a cyclical revisionary process he referred to as the hermeneutic circle (Peoples, 2021). In this process, a researcher strives to understand how people make sense of the world, one's biases, judgments, or preconceived knowledge, also known as foresight or fore-conceptions, by revising new information obtained (Peoples, 2021). In this cyclical process, understanding is continually changing as more information is added to the whole picture. Thus, the goal is to make the parts or individual experiences of a phenomenon as important as the whole (Peoples, 2021).

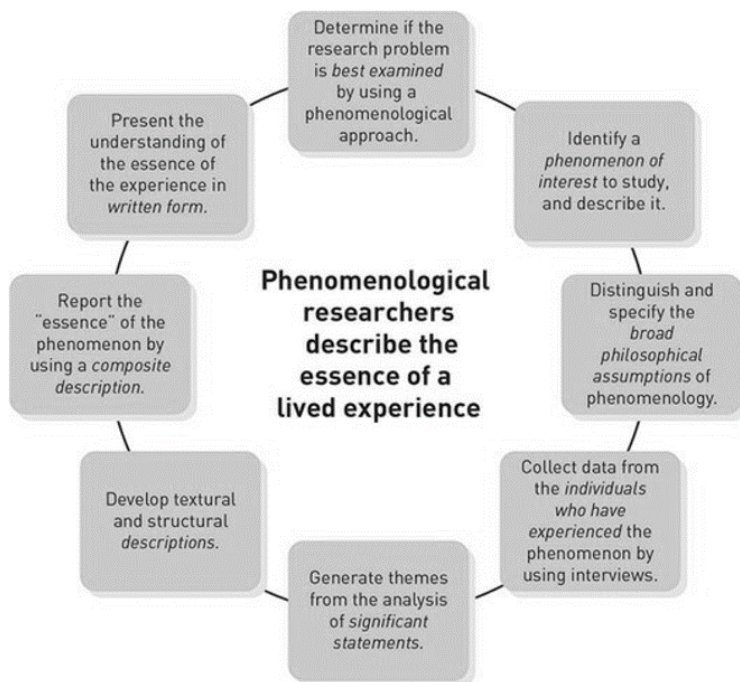


Figure 1. Procedures for conducting phenomenological research. Adapted from Creswell and Poth (2018, p. 130).

Hermeneutic phenomenology. Hermeneutic phenomenology, also known as the interpretive perspective within phenomenology, centers on interpreting experiences and how those who live through specific experiences understand those experiences (Neubauer et al., 2019). This design was employed for this study. Heidegger (1962) introduced hermeneutical phenomenology and the idea that individuals could not dismiss the preconceptions that would

guide how they make meaning of the world. The researcher developed the concept of *dasein* (i.e., the human way of being in the world) to emphasize this notion (Heidegger, 1962). Dasein is derived from German and is literally translated as “to be there.” Hermeneutic phenomenologists seek to acknowledge how dasein situates individuals to cultural, political, and social influences that guide choices and decision-making (Campbell, 2001).

Heidegger's (1962) framework utilizes the hermeneutic circle for researchers to assess data to understand a phenomenon better while highlighting researcher biases and judgments (Peoples, 2021). Built into this framework is the idea that a researcher may have some level of understanding of or familiarity with the phenomenon and incorporate it into the data analysis (Peoples, 2021). In hermeneutic phenomenology, "the parts inform the whole, and the whole informs the parts" (Peoples, 2021, p. 2). With this approach, researchers make their biases explicit and look beyond those biases to understand a phenomenon better with each new piece of information that unfolds (Peoples, 2021).

Considered through a critical race lens, the issue of study abroad inequity has been prevalent and unaddressed for many years. Ignoring the lack of opportunity for marginalized populations showed the systemic racism inherent within our educational systems. Over the last 100 years, phenomenological researchers highlighted many "previously ignored phenomena of the human experience" (Wojnar & Swanson, 2007, p. 173). Given these facets of phenomenological research and the goal of understanding the African American study abroad experience as perceived by African Americans, a phenomenological method was the most appropriate for this research study.

Researcher role. One common characteristic of qualitative research is that the researcher serves as the research instrument to collect and analyze data (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017).

Although a survey was administered to collect demographic data, I was the primary research instrument, creating a more subjective research design where researcher reflexivity was critical (see Lochmiller & Lester, 2017). Reflexivity refers to "the process of intentionally accounting for your assumptions, biases, experiences, and identities that may impact any aspect of your research study" and is an essential component of qualitative research (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017, p. 95).

While conducting this study, I remained mindful of how the participation and beliefs about studying abroad could shape data collection and analysis. Assessing researcher positionality was also vital to this study, providing the context of my identity and position concerning the research and how that could impact the study results. I worked at a small, highly selective, liberal arts institution in the southeast. Within this role, I provided career development and guidance to the institution's 148 international students and assisted the 1,900 students enrolled at the college with various international internship opportunities.

I was established at the intersection of international education and career development. Given that the research was conducted with individuals external to the institution and outside the scope of my professional responsibilities, this aspect mitigated the potential for power dynamics to impact the research study. I worked in both a professional and a personal capacity in international education, specifically study abroad, for more than a decade; therefore, the reach of recruitment extended to former students or colleagues.

Given my extensive experience in study abroad and identity as an African American who had studied abroad, I was positioned as a participant-observer and recognized the level of contextual familiarity with the phenomenon and population studied. Therefore, I approached the research process by understanding that the findings' interpretations could be both partial and

positional. Given this stance, others were invited to critique the provided interpretations (see Lochmiller & Lester, 2017). I participated in a semi-structured reflexivity interview to uncover possible biases and judgments before data collection and analysis to address these preconceptions (see Lochmiller & Lester, 2017). Applying the hermeneutic circle, I conducted an ongoing assessment of participant interviews to revise and develop cyclically a more holistic understanding of the African American experience around study abroad.

Conclusion

The goal of this study was to understand the study abroad experiences of African Americans. This researcher explored the essence of the study abroad experience for African Americans, the factors influencing those decisions to study abroad, and study abroad preparedness. Understanding the systemic complexities contributing to unequal access to global opportunities is critical (Omi & Winant, 1994). The research questions that guided this study included the following:

RQ1: What were the lived study abroad experiences of African Americans?

RQ2: To what extent did familial factors influence African Americans' study abroad experience?

RQ3: To what extent did social factors influence African Americans' study abroad experience?

RQ4: To what extent did financial factors influence African Americans' study abroad experience?

RQ5: What contributed to African Americans' level of preparedness for their study abroad experience?

Understanding the essence or shared experiences of a particular group of people as they make meaning of their experiences is critical in phenomenological research and was essential to the current research study (see McMillan, 2004). Phenomenological researchers also seek to understand participants' voices by allowing participants' direct accounts and experiences to drive the direction of the study (Creswell & Miller, 2000). This method is particularly important when working with underrepresented and marginalized populations (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2018; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

Chapter 4: Research Study Procedure and Methodology

African American students comprise 16% of students' total enrollment at colleges and universities in the United States (NCES, 2019). However, this population comprises less than 6% of the students studying abroad (IIE, 2016; U.S. News & World Report, 2017). The needs assessment discussed in Chapter 2 showed the challenges faced by all students when considering studying abroad options. A few underscored influences included funding study abroad, receiving information about study abroad opportunities, and stressing the importance of someone who could serve as a resource to guide learners through the study abroad process. Although data collected within the needs assessment were not specific to African American students, the literature confirmed that African American students' needs mirrored those of the White and Latin(x) needs assessment participants (see Lewis, 2009; Salisbury et al., 2009). However, the question remains of why White students can overcome these barriers 80% more often than African American students (Penn & Tanner, 2009; Wang et al., 2016).

Despite initiatives such as the allocation of funding for ethnic minority students, along with the development of specific initiatives, representation in study abroad remains low for African American students (Milian et al., 2015). One should investigate the various facets of study abroad to practically assess this persistence. Within study abroad, evidence of the disparity is shown. The needs assessment was prompted by this issue—of the more than 400 students who studied abroad with the researcher in Antwerp, Belgium, not one student identified as African American.

One aspect of CRT is the concept of color-blindness or being color mute (Pollock, 2004). Therefore, color is not recognized, so everyone should be treated equally, and race should not be acknowledged (Pollock, 2004). However, this thought does not consider the centuries of racial

bias woven into the American tapestry permeating most of the U.S. educational processes. With this approach, not addressing race only solidifies White as the standard or norm and does not clarify or allow for response to the specific needs of other ethnic groups (Ramos, 2013).

Although literature supports the premise that the needs assessment participants' needs overlapped many of those identified by African American students, further investigation would show that African American students have a voice to provide their own narratives (see Pollock, 2004; Ramos, 2013).

Chapter 3 identified the literature supporting a phenomenological research study to examine African Americans' study abroad experiences. CRT highlights the essence of counter-storytelling and allowing marginalized populations to tell the stories of their experiences (Ramos, 2013). In this study, the researcher highlighted the essence of African Americans' experiences studying abroad and sought to understand the factors influencing their study abroad preparedness and intent. By providing a means for African Americans to share their narratives, the researcher hoped to shift the power dynamics to learn about the African American experience abroad (Ladson-Billings, 2006). This chapter shows the research design and methodology that will be employed to explore African Americans' lived study abroad experiences.

Research Design and Logic Model

One should identify a study's various essential facets to thoroughly investigate the essence of African Americans' lived experiences while studying abroad. Considering the specific context, inputs, and outputs is essential to achieving this study's desired outcomes. Figure 2 illustrates the logic model utilized to specify the necessary resources involved in implementing the study. Gaining knowledge of the resources used and needed to fund study abroad experiences for African Americans, African Americans' lived experiences, and the factors influencing the

study abroad experience and participation in studying abroad by African Americans is the desired proximal outcome. Intended intermediate and distal outcomes include normalizing study abroad for African American college students, lessening fear of discrimination while abroad, building students' skillsets to communicate better the concerns of studying abroad with family and friends, increasing the number of students seeing studying abroad as a viable option, and increasing higher education administrators' awareness of study abroad barriers.

Context	Inputs	Outputs	Outcome -- Impact	
<p><u>Needs Assessment</u> The needs assessment findings evidenced several factors as most influential to study abroad students.</p> <p>Those factors include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦Familal Factors ♦Social Factors ♦Financial Factors ♦Preparedness to study abroad <p>This study seeks to explore the essence of the lived study abroad experiences of African Americans</p>	<p>♦ 10 -25 African Americans with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -study abroad experience -the ability to participate in the research study virtually (access to a computer/phone, internet, and the Zoom app) <p><u>Resources</u></p> <p>Time Commitment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ 10 Minutes- complete demographic survey ♦ 1 hour- Initial Interview ♦ 1 hour- Follow-Up Interview (When necessary) 	<p><u>Participation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •African Americans at least 18 years of age •African Americans who have studied abroad and are able to participate virtually in the research study <p><u>Activities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete demographic survey •Initial interview •Follow-up Interview (when necessary) •Member checking- to ensure accuracy of collected data 	<p><u>Proximal</u></p> <p>Increased knowledge of resources used and needed to fund study abroad experience for African Americans</p> <p>Increased awareness of the study abroad experiences of African Americans</p> <p>Increased knowledge of factors influencing the study abroad experience and participation in study abroad by African Americans</p>	<p><u>Medium- Distal</u></p> <p>Normalization of study abroad for African American college students</p> <p>Lessened fear of discrimination while abroad and students will be able to better communicate the concerns around study abroad with family and friends</p> <p>Increase in number of students seeing study abroad as a viable option</p> <p>Increased awareness of study abroad barriers for African Americans by administrators</p>
<p>ASSUMPTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • African Americans are interested in sharing their study abroad experiences and able to participate virtually. 		<p>EXTERNAL FACTORS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An international pandemic limits international travel and students are unable to study abroad. • Due to the pandemic college and universities close and conduct all classes and meetings virtually. • International relations between America and other countries may worsen and students are limited from traveling abroad 		

Figure 2. Logic model for understanding the African American study abroad experience.

The researcher will utilize semi-structured interviews to collect data from African Americans who studied abroad. This researcher will investigate African Americans' experiences while studying and the factors affecting their decisions to study abroad and preparedness to study abroad. The study will answer the following research questions:

RQ1: What were the lived study abroad experiences of African Americans?

RQ2: To what extent did familial factors influence African Americans' study abroad experience?

RQ3: To what extent did social factors influence African Americans' study abroad experience?

RQ4: To what extent did financial factors influence African Americans' study abroad experience?

RQ5: To what extent did African Americans feel prepared for their study abroad experience?

The researcher will employ a qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological research design to answer these research questions (see Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011). This process will allow for qualitative data collection via semi-structured interviews as well as data analysis and inferences to determine if the results answered the research questions (see Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2018; Shadish et al., 2002). The researcher will assess qualitative data and quantitative demographic survey data. The summary matrix in Appendix A outlines the research questions' alignment with the instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis.

Method

Participants. The participants for this study will be African Americans who studied abroad. These participants will be at least 18 years of age and identify as African American. Table 6 shows the participant demographics.

Table 6

Participant Demographics

Participant Demographics
Identify as African American
Have study abroad experience
Consent to participate in semi-structured interviews, follow-up interviews, and complete a demographic survey
May be willing to participate in Member Checking to increase study reliability

Instrumentation. Interviews will be conducted to gather data on the African American study abroad experience. This specific instrumentation, utilizing both interviews and follow-up interviews, will show richer findings and a more holistic, precise picture of the essence of study abroad for African Americans (see Peoples, 2021). The researcher will use interviews to collect data. These data will assist in sufficiently answering the research question (Peoples, 2021).

The participants who need to explain and further clarify portions of their interviews will participate in a follow-up interview. The follow-up interviews are built into the research design so that participants could offer additional insights into unclear areas of their interviews or areas that required elaboration from participants to detail experiences fully (see Peoples, 2021). Data will then be assessed for clarity and understanding (see Giorgi, 1985).

Interview questions. The semi-structured interviews will guide the data collection process. The individual interviews will offer in-depth insights into participant experiences. Although the semi-structured interviews will provide fluidity in the interview process, several questions will guide the participant interviews. Those questions include the following:

1. Please describe your lived experience studying abroad as if speaking to someone unfamiliar with study abroad?
2. What were some positive experiences you had while studying abroad?

3. How did the views, opinions, and thoughts of those within your family influence your study abroad experience?
4. What messages did you hear about study abroad from family and close friends?
5. How did the views, opinions, and thoughts of those within your community or immediate social surroundings influence your study abroad experience?
6. How did financial factors influence your study abroad experience?
7. To what extent did you feel prepared for your study abroad experience?
8. What if any support did you encounter when planning to study abroad?
 - a. Institutional
 - b. Interpersonal (family & friends)
 - c. Personal
9. How did your college/university prepare you for your study abroad experience?

The follow-up questions included the following:

1. What were some things you struggled to understand while studying abroad?
2. What/if any barriers did you encounter when planning to study abroad?
 - a. Institutional
 - b. Interpersonal (family & friends)
 - c. Personal
3. To what extent did study abroad influence your employability?
4. How were you accepted as a Black person in your host country?
5. Were there any things you wish you knew as a Black person before your study abroad?
6. In light of the current pandemic, what are your thoughts about study abroad?

The questions in the follow-up interviews will be guided by the purpose of the follow-up. If the follow-up interview is intended to provide a more complete narrative of specific participant experience, appropriate questions will be asked to gain more detail. Furthermore, if the follow-up interview goal is to gain clarity, appropriate questions will be asked to provide more exact information around the experience.

Validity and Reliability

Although reliability and validity are treated separately in quantitative studies, these terms are not viewed separately in qualitative research (Golafshani, 2003; Tracy, 2010). Lochmiller and Lester (2017) defined qualitative validity as the degree to which the researcher's account aligned with the participants' realities. Creswell and Miller (2000) defined validity as the extent to which a researcher could provide an accurate account that represents participants' realities of a specific phenomenon.

Many researchers believe that, in qualitative research, trustworthiness, credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability are necessary to demonstrate both validity and reliability, as established utilizing various accountability measures (Agar, 1986; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Golafshani, 2003; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Golafshani (2003) posited that qualitative researchers who established validity also denoted reliability. Validity is often referred to as trustworthiness in qualitative research (Krefting, 1991; Lincoln & Guba, 1985); therefore, the researcher demonstrated trustworthiness based on Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria, outlining credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability.

Trustworthiness and Credibility

Lochmiller and Lester (2017) defined trustworthiness as "the degree to which data collection, analysis, and the presentation of findings are represented in a thorough and verifiable

manner" (p. 296). Trustworthiness can be established utilizing one or more of the following: member checking, triangulation, peer debriefing, thick descriptions, researcher reflexivity, and external audits (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated that the four major trustworthiness components are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility refers to the plausibility of the research findings (Tracy, 2010), or the extent to which the data collection, analysis, inferences, and conclusion are believable and trustworthy from both the researcher's and participants' perspectives (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; McMillan, 2004).

The researcher will employ member checking, researcher reflexivity, and peer debriefing to ensure the research findings' credibility. The process of member checking consists of "taking data and interpretations back to participants to confirm the credibility of the information and narrative account" (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 127). Some researchers suggest that member checking is the most essential technique to establish credibility (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, the researcher will provide participants with transcriptions of their interviews and asked that they determine whether the data is correct or in need of clarification to offer follow-up interviews for any misinterpreted information.

Researcher reflexivity is the process by which researchers self-disclose the biases, beliefs, and assumptions they carry that may influence their inquiries (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Tracy (2010) defined researcher reflexivity as "one of the most celebrated practices of qualitative research, and is considered to be honesty and authenticity with one's self, one's research, and one's audience" (p. 842). This self-exposure process allows the reader to make judgments about the researcher's viewpoint (Tracy, 2010). The researcher can be forthcoming about their shortcomings and strengths, so readers can better understand their positionality within the study (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

To identify researcher bias in this study, the researcher participated in a self-awareness interview. During this interview, the researcher was asked questions to determine areas of possible bias or preconceptions prior to conducting interviews with participants. One assumption identified during the self-awareness interview was that all participants' experiences would be negative because the researcher's own experience abroad was negative. Another preconception was that colorism would impact the female participants' experience more than the male participants' experience. A third researcher assumption was that participants who attended HBCUs at the time of their study abroad would be better prepared for the racial discrimination they could experience while abroad. The final researcher assumption was that all participants would have similar experiences within specific countries. For example, if one participant experienced discrimination in a specific country, all participants would have similar experiences. Therefore, the self-awareness interview was useful in identifying areas of bias and preconceptions prior to the start of the research study.

Journaling. Phenomenological researchers aim to understand a phenomenon (Peoples, 2021). When taking on the role of the instrument, there are various subjectivities that a researcher brings to the phenomenon based on experiences and levels of familiarity with the phenomenon. In this study, the researcher will document preconceptions around the phenomenon via journaling to make the researcher's judgments and biases explicit.

Journaling is a means of recording and modifying the researcher's assumptions and understanding of the studied phenomenon. In phenomenological research, researchers use journaling to substitute the researcher's initial perceptions with fairer assessments of the phenomenon through reflection (Gadamer, 1975). Therefore, before and throughout the data analysis process, the researcher will use journaling to bracket biases and preconceived notions.

The researcher will assess how those judgments are revised throughout the data collection and analysis processes. Thus, journaling will show the written record of the researcher's revised thinking about the phenomenon to recognize judgments and areas that lack objectivity (see Peoples, 2021).

Peer debriefing is another credibility measure. Peer debriefing refers to the review of the research process and collected data by a neutral colleague, external to the research study but familiar with the explored phenomenon (Creswell & Miller, 2000). This person can support the researcher and assess and challenge the researcher's assumptions and methodology (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Peer debriefing can help the researcher assess the research process and findings to create accountability (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Peoples, 2021).

Procedures

This study will illuminate participants' voices and the critical elements of study abroad as lived and experienced by African Americans. Understanding human experiences is essential to avoid investigation inaccuracies and to offer insight into individuals' lived experiences of a phenomenon (Giorgi, 1985). Through these outlined procedures, the researcher will identify the process of obtaining and analyzing collected data.

Data collection. Data for this study will be collected through semi-structured interviews and a demographic survey. The researcher will utilize semi-structured interviews to collect qualitative data from individual participants. Interviews will be approximately 1-hour long and will be conducted and recorded via Zoom. After initial interviews, follow-up interviews will be conducted to fill information gaps or discuss unclear participant experiences (see Giorgi, 1985). These gaps could occur from incomplete narratives, forgotten details, or excluded information,

either implicitly or explicitly (see Giorgi, 1985). Conducting initial interviews will allow the participants to recount their experiences spontaneously.

In contrast, follow-up interviews offer participants an opportunity to highlight aspects of their experiences to provide a more holistic picture or expound on initial ideas to provide more detail (see Giorgi, 1985). All interviews will be video recorded and used by the researcher to assess areas of emphasis and to reveal non-verbal cues. The interviews will be transcribed and used by the researcher for further investigation. Opening interviews and follow-up interviews will be the primary data collection methods for this study.

Before participating in the study, all participants will be informed that participation is voluntary. The participants will be advised about the benefits and threats of participation and will review the complete oral informed consent document virtually with the researcher before participating in the study. The informed consent document also will show the study's goal, outline the parameters of confidentiality, and highlight that the participants could withdraw from the study at any time. The participants will be required to complete a demographic survey. The demographic survey will include questions about students' race, ethnicity, gender, age, study abroad location, year of study abroad experience, college major, and college graduation year. Each participant will be coded with a number-and-letter identifier to ensure confidentiality (e.g., P1, P2, P3, P4). Codes will be used during data analysis, and only the researcher will know participants' identities.

The researcher will recruit African Americans with study abroad experience by utilizing purposive and snowball sampling. The researcher will use purposive sampling to select participants who met specific criteria (Creswell, 2005; McMillan, 2004), which for this study is African Americans with study abroad experience. Because this researcher will explore the

African American experience of studying abroad, only those who both identify as African American and studied abroad will be selected to participate. Snowball sampling will occur when the researcher begins the study with a select few participants. These participants then will recommend or nominate others who fit the participant criteria (see McMillan, 2004). The researcher will then recruit additional participants based on the recommendations of current participants (see McMillan, 2004). This specific method is useful when beginning with a limited number of initial participants (McMillan, 2004). Snowball and purposive sampling are particularly useful for phenomenological research when used together, given small sample sizes (Peoples, 2021).

The researcher will recruit between five and 25 African Americans with study abroad experience. The participants will be initially recruited via social media networks and professional affinity groups. All who respond to the virtual recruitment will be sent a follow-up email. The follow-up email will outline the study's details and include a link to the virtual consent form, explaining the voluntary nature of participation and a demographic survey.

The needs assessment showed that students who had someone inform them of study abroad felt more prepared to study abroad. Additionally, participants in the needs assessment noted several factors that influenced their decisions to study abroad, including financing study abroad opportunities, social pressures and acceptance of study abroad, and the impact of studying abroad on academic completion and requirements. Although research supported the need for these resources for African American students, none of the needs assessment participants identified as African American. Due to this lack of representation of African American students in the initial needs assessment, the researcher relied on literature to confirm African American students' study abroad needs. This researcher will elicit African Americans'

first-hand accounts to identify and confirm overlaps outlined in the literature. The researcher also will seek to find newly identified themes through this research.

Data analysis. Given that phenomenological researchers show lived experiences, data will be analyzed through an emergent methodological approach (Peoples, 2021). In this approach, a researcher follows the data and allows the data to direct how meaning is applied to the phenomenon (Peoples, 2021). Living through the participant experiences and descriptions, keen attention to detail is essential to revealing the essence of study abroad (Peoples, 2021).

Based on this process, the researcher will analyze the qualitative data beginning with a thorough review of all participant responses. The transcribed interview data will be analyzed utilizing in vivo coding. In vivo coding is the process of utilizing participant quotes to categorize data and examining the similarities and differences (Saldana, 2016). After noting all the possible codes, the researcher will decide on the preliminary codes, which reflect the most frequently expressed phrases and ideas. After completing the in vivo coding, the researcher will apply axial coding to examine all the data, describe and analyze key terms to identify various categories and determine connections among the various codes to establish themes (see Creswell & Miller, 2000; Saldaña, 2016). Although in vivo coding identifies codes that emerged from the data, the researcher will find themes related to study abroad experiences, including factors influencing study abroad, as well as study abroad preparedness as identified in both the literature and needs assessment.

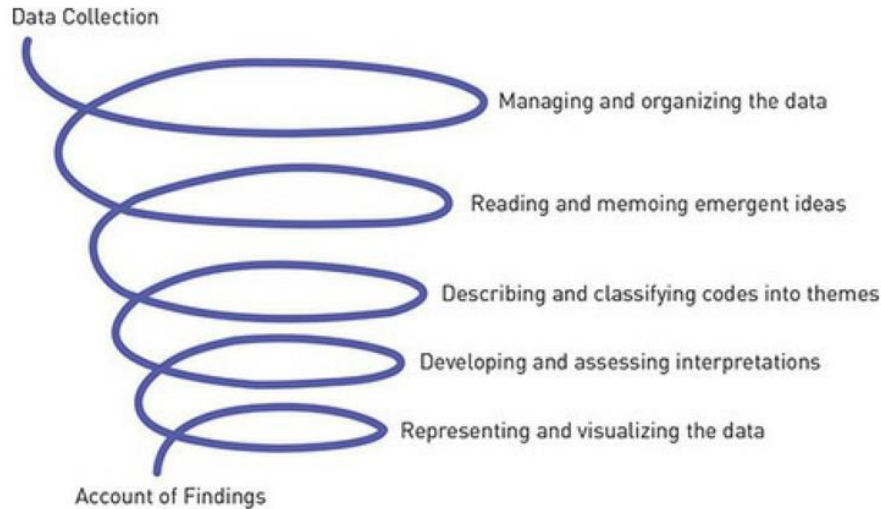


Figure 3. Phenomenological data analysis spiral. Adapted from Creswell and Poth (2018, p. 255)

In vivo and axial coding will provide the thematic inventory to steer the data analysis. The qualitative data will be triangulated via peer review, member checking, and rich descriptions to identify dissonance areas within the datasets and protect the results (see Creswell & Miller, 2000; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Triangulation also helped to protect validity and reliability.

In hermeneutic data analysis, there is an emphasis on the interactions between the researcher and the data (Peoples, 2021). A researcher handles translating and contrasting participant accounts to determine the essence of the phenomenon (Peoples, 2021). By applying the hermeneutic circle (i.e., the constant cycle of a renewed understanding of the phenomenon), the researcher will assess participants' first-hand accounts about studying abroad.

Dependability, Transferability, and Confirmability

Dependability represents the consistency of findings (Krefting, 1991). In essence, dependability is the degree to which the study findings would be comparable if replicated by another researcher (Creswell & Miller, 2000). This concept is like quantitative data reliability, which refers to the consistency of measurement and reliability across several administrations

(Creswell & Miller, 2000; Lochmiller & Lester, 2017). In this study, a detailed explanation of the research steps will be outlined and followed to establish dependability.

In phenomenological research, the goal is to illuminate participants' lived experiences and provide an understanding of a phenomenon. This goal differs from those of many quantitative researchers, who typically intend to extend the sample population's quantitative findings and conclusions to a larger population, achieving generalizability. In qualitative research, the emphasis is on how adequately the data, analyses, and inferences are described and understood by researchers in other settings (McMillan, 2004). Therefore, transferability refers to how findings can be applied to a context outside of that of the original research study (Guba, 1981; Krefting, 1991). Context can refer to a population with similar characteristics or experiences, phenomena, settings, or environments (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Peoples, 2021). The insights uncovered in this research could be applied to other populations who studied abroad, specifically other populations of color.

Confirmability is the idea that a qualitative study's research findings are the product of independent research and not tainted by researcher bias (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Given that the researcher also serves as the instrument in qualitative research, each researcher also carries individual perspectives (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). However, confirmability is the extent to which the research findings and inferences can be corroborated by external constituents (Creswell & Miller, 2000). The researcher participated in a self-awareness interview to uncover the conscious and unconscious bias about the phenomenon that could influence the research study to address the researcher's personal bias. This process differs from bracketing because bracketing is intended to highlight researcher bias as deliberate in removing those preconceptions and

eliminating bias (Moustakas, 1994). This self-awareness interview allowed the researcher to remain aware of the bias present and show the researcher's positionality.

This researcher will require various inputs and outputs to achieve the desired outcomes. The summary matrix is noted in Appendix A. The matrix illustrates the alignment among the research questions, instrumentation, and data collection and analysis.

Threats to Validity

When assessing threats to validity, several areas of threats should be considered. For this study, the researcher identified specific threats to address. The first threats to internal validity are historical threats, which are events occurring simultaneously with the research that could be the underlying cause of a response or effect (see Shadish et al., 2002). The recollection of experiences abroad could be tainted given current international travel limitations due to the international pandemic. The participants may remember their time abroad with fonder memories than experienced because international travel was unavailable at the time of the study.

With snowball sampling, the participants could share their experiences with other participants, thus mitigating the studies' individual nature. Attrition is another internal threat, referring to the loss of participants during a study, impacting the study results (Shadish et al., 2002). Amid a global pandemic and escalating racial tensions within the United States, the participants might not have the emotional capacity to engage in the study, which could cause them to terminate participation.

Conclusion

Studying abroad provides many benefits that expand beyond language and culture. International education's personal and professional benefits make it one of the most valuable tools available in preparing well-rounded, internationally competent, and globally aware

students. Without these experiences, one can be at a significant disadvantage to those who have benefited from participating in such opportunities (Wang et al., 2016). Because these opportunities are often unattainable for African Americans, institution leaders should better understand the experiences of African Americans' who do manage to make it abroad (Bailey Shea, 2009; Sweeney, 2013).

The purpose of this research study is to gain a better sense of the essence of African Americans' lived experiences studying abroad. This research should result in more support, information, and financial resources available to African Americans as they navigate the study abroad process. These findings can guide institution leaders' understandings of how to establish equitable practices for studying abroad.

Chapter 5: Research Findings

This chapter shows the results and findings of this phenomenological study, highlighting the African American study abroad experience. The first section outlines participant demographics, followed by an overview of the data collection and analysis process as outlined in Chapter 4. The following section presents the empirical finding by research question. Next, the researcher identifies recommendations and limitations of the research study and concludes with implications for future research.

The study was designed to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: What were the lived study abroad experiences of African Americans?

RQ2: To what extent did familial factors influence African Americans' study abroad experience?

RQ3: To what extent did social factors influence African Americans' study abroad experience?

RQ4: To what extent did financial factors influence African Americans' study abroad experience?

RQ5: What contributed to African Americans' level of preparedness for their study abroad experience?

Participant Demographics

The steps in phenomenological research involved identifying an essential set of themes associated with a phenomenon, highlighting the essence or common experiences around the phenomenon, and interpreting the meaning of those lived experiences (see Creswell & Poth, 2018). The goal of this study was to understand African Americans' study abroad experiences to get a broader picture of the factors influencing their experiences studying abroad. As noted in the

previous chapter, the participants were asked to complete a demographic survey. This survey captured demographics, such as participant gender, race, ethnicity, whether they had studied abroad, the level of immersion they had with their host country (1 being completely immersed and 5 being not immersed), and how long ago they studied abroad.

All participants who identified as African American and had participated in study abroad were selected to participate in this research study. A total of 17 participants took part in the semi-structured interviews lasting approximately 60-minutes. A follow-up interview was conducted to clarify data that were unclear for one participant. That follow-up interview lasted approximately 25 minutes.

Of the 17 participants, four were men and 13 were women. Most participants (59%) attended HBCUs while studying abroad, while 41% attended PWIs. Furthermore, 15 participants studied abroad between the ages of 19-21, with only one studying abroad at age 23 and another at the age of 25. Three participants studied abroad between 1-5 years ago, five between 6-10 years ago, and nine between 11-20 years ago. Sixteen of the 17 participants traveled abroad during their sophomore or junior year of college. Although the college majors while studying abroad ranged from music to engineering, eight of the participants had a language major or minor that prompted their interest in study abroad. The demographics for each participant are noted in Table 7.

Table 7

Participant Demographics

Gender Abroad Identifier	Gender	Age while abroad	Institution Type	Years since study abroad	Classification While abroad	College Major/Minor
P1	Female	21	HBCU	3	Junior	Social Work
P2	Male	25	PWI	6	Graduate Student	Higher Education Administration
P3	Female	21	HBCU	8	Junior	International Studies
P4	Female	19	PWI	11	Sophomore	Major: Communications Minor: Spanish
P5	Female	20	PWI	1	Junior	Psychology
P6	Female	19	PWI	16	Junior	Major: Neuroscience, Minor: Music
P7	Female	19	HBCU	2	Sophomore	Major: Criminology, Minor: Political science
P8	Female	23	PWI	16	Junior	Major: English Minor: Spanish
P9	Female	20	HBCU	18	Sophomore	Major: Economics Minors: Spanish & Management and Organization
P10	Female	20	HBCU	9	Junior	Major: Marketing Minor: Spanish
P11	Female	21	PWI	13	Senior	Major: Elementary Education Minors: Counseling/Human Services & Spanish
P12	Male	20	HBCU	18	Sophomore	Major: Economics Minor: Finance
P13	Female	19	HBCU	18	Sophomore	Major: Economics Minor: Spanish
P14	Female	19	HBCU	10	Junior	Business Administration
P15	Male	20	HBCU	17	Junior	Major 1: Spanish Major 2: Psychology
P16	Female	20	HBCU	19	Junior	Major: Spanish Minor: Business Management
P17	Male	20	PWI	9	Junior	Political Science

Moreover, 71% of the participants believed that they had either an immersive or very immersive study abroad experience. When assessing the length of time spent abroad, eight participants spent between 1-2 weeks and 2 months abroad. The other nine spent between one full semester and one academic year abroad. The number of participants who studied abroad with partner programs versus institutional programs was almost equal, with seven participants

utilizing partner programs and eight participants traveling through institutional programs. Two participants were unsure whether they studied abroad with a partner or institutional program. Also, participants studied abroad in Europe, the United Kingdom, Latin America, the Middle East, and two countries in Africa. Tables 8 outlines this information.

Table 8

Study Abroad Characteristics

Identifier	Level of Immersion (1-very immersive through 5- not immersive)	Country of Study	Type of Program (Partner/Institution)	Length of Time Abroad
P1	3	Cape Verde	My college/university	1-2 weeks
P2	1	Colombia	Unsure	Summer
P3	1	Costa Rica	Partner Program	1 semester
P4	1	Costa Rica	My college/university	1 month
P5	3	Denmark	Partner Program	1 semester
P6	3	Ghana	My college/university	England: 4-6 weeks, Ghana: 1 semester;
P7	5	Israel	My college/university	1-2 weeks
P8	3	London	My college/university	1 month
P9	1	Mexico	My college/university	5 weeks
P10	1	Mexico	My college/university	5 weeks, 2 weeks, 6 months
P11	1	Mexico	My college/university	1 month
P12	1	Spain	Partner Program	1 year
P13	1	Spain	Partner Program	1 semester
P14	2	Spain	Unsure	1 semester
P15	1	Spain	Partner Program	1 semester
P16	1	Spain & France	Partner Program	Mexico: summer, Spain: 1 semester), France: 1 semester)
P17	1	Venezuela	Partner Program	1 semester

Global awareness is one of the most anticipated outcomes of study abroad. When asked about the global competencies gained while abroad, 100% stated that their study abroad experience increased their global awareness. Although 94% reported not traveling extensively prior to their time abroad, 65% traveled extensively following their experience abroad. Fifteen of the 17 participants noted that their study abroad experience had a positive impact on their employability. Unsurprisingly, all participants stated that they would recommend study abroad to

current college and university students. Although nine participants stated that their experience abroad was not influenced by colorism, when asked directly during the semi-structured interviews, many participants shared experiences of colorism, demonstrating that the majority of participants' experiences abroad were influenced by colorism. This information is noted in Table 9.

Table 9

Global Awareness & Experiences

Identifier	Extensive global travel before study abroad	Extensive global travel following study abroad	Colorism influenced experience abroad	Experience abroad positively influenced employability	Experience abroad increased global awareness	Would recommend study abroad
P1	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
P2	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
P3	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
P4	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
P5	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
P6	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
P7	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
P8	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
P9	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
P10	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
P11	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
P12	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
P13	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
P14	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
P15	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
P16	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
P17	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

Data Collection

Phenomenological researchers explore a phenomenon based on several individuals' shared meanings of their lived experiences of that phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This process consists of interviewing individuals who have experienced a particular phenomenon. Researchers recommend interviewing between five and 25 participants with lived experiences of the phenomenon (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017; McMillan, 2004; Polkinghorne, 1989).

As outlined in the previous chapter, data were collected from 17 participants through a demographic survey and semi-structured interviews lasting approximately 60-minutes each. The

demographic information was collected before the interview (see the full list of questions in Appendix C). During the interviews, each participant was asked a series of research questions around the phenomenon of study abroad, as noted in Chapter 4. The participants shared stories, insights, and scenarios illustrating their experiences abroad. For the participant requiring a follow-up interview, the researcher needed verification regarding the timeframe spent abroad. The researcher then conducted an additional 25-minute interview with one participant to address points needing clarity.

Following each interview, the researcher transcribed the interaction. The completed transcriptions of the interviews were sent to the participants. The participants were asked to verify the accuracy of the transcriptions or correct any inaccurate information, adding in any additional comments. These data were then utilized to assess each research question.

Data Analysis

The goal of phenomenological research is to focus on “what participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon” (Creswell, & Poth, 2018, p. 20) and to reduce the individual experiences to find a universal essence of a phenomenon (van Manen, 1990). When analyzing phenomenological data, one should organize and convert data to manageable formats for analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In this study, video recordings were transcribed to provide written accounts of all participant responses. The researcher then reviewed the transcripts to identify significant statements or quotes that offered insights into how participants experienced the phenomenon, also known as *horizontalization* (Moustakas, 1994). Utilizing in vivo and axial coding methods, an inventory of codes were created to outline participant experiences and views (Saldaña, 2016).

The researcher sorted the transcriptions according to its corresponding research question to answer the research questions. The outline of research questions and corresponding interview questions are noted in the summary matrix (Appendix B). The researcher then identified the common themes across the dataset to establish a thematic structure in an effort to identify universal dimensions of the study abroad experience (see Lochmiller & Lester, 2017). These statements and themes provided *textural* and *structural* descriptions, which were descriptions of participant experiences of the phenomenon, and the context or setting where the participants experienced the phenomenon (see Moustakas, 1994). This process then led to presenting the essence of the phenomenon, which focused on participants common experiences.

As noted in Chapter 4, the researcher utilized member checking, researcher reflexivity, and peer debriefing to establish credibility. Researcher reflexivity was established through participation in a self-awareness interview and journaling, as outlined later in the assumptions section of this chapter. By employing member checking, the researcher reviewed transcripts with the participants to ensure accuracy of the data collected (see Creswell, 2003). The researcher also partnered with an international education professional well versed in study abroad to use as a resource and review the research process and methodology, thus applying peer debriefing (see Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Addressing Conceptual Assumptions

This section outlines the researcher assumptions and participant responses that either diffused or validated those preconceptions. Phenomenological reflection or reflexivity is the process of identifying the researcher's personal experiences and preconceptions about the explored phenomenon, as required to limit researcher bias (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lochmiller & Lester, 2017). Researchers should be aware of their own experiences with the phenomenon and

the situations and contexts that have influenced their experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This reflexivity is critical to make the researchers' assumptions explicit (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017).

As stated in Chapter 4, I participated in a semi-structured, self-awareness interview to uncover possible biases or judgments before data collection and analysis to address this issue. During the time, I found that maintaining objectivity and remaining open-minded was key, given the traumatic experience the researcher had while studying abroad. I had to avoid projecting that experience onto participants who might not have had a similar experience.

Given the hermeneutic nature of this research, I outlined preconceptions and how they were revised and modified as participant accounts were compared via journaling. The process of journaling provided me a method of recording and revising participant experiences, assumptions, and interpretation around study abroad. This process provided me with space to revise personal biases with each participant experience. The aim of this cyclical process of revision was to replace my preconceptions with more fitting determinations through the process of reflection (see Gadamer, 1975).

Another assumption was that the African American women in the study would have more negative experiences around colorism and inclusion than the male participants, as initially validated. For example, the first five interviews were with women, several of whom confirmed these experiences of colorism and exclusion. However, two of the four male participants referenced being prohibited from entering spaces where other lighter hued males could enter and being excluded from social circles while abroad.

Another presupposition was that the participants who attended HBCUs while studying abroad would have more intentional pre-departure preparation specifically addressing possible racial struggles while abroad. Most participants from HBCUs who traveled abroad experienced

the same traumas incited by their race as those who went to PWIs. Also, most seemed to lack the necessary preparation for the possible racism they would experience abroad.

However, one participant from an HBCU mentioned that she did not experience racism in a country deemed “the most racist country” by another participant. When describing her experience, she mentioned that, before arriving in country, her professor taught her group about the history of the country and how this history impacts people of color. She also mentioned that her professor strategically selected the area of the country with a higher concentration of people of color for their study abroad location. This type of intentionality and strategic thinking seems to be what made her experience different from those of other students who studied in the same country.

I also expected that, if one student experienced racism in a particular country or area of a country, all participants would have a similar experience if in the country for a similar period. However, there were participants who were in a country and experienced severe racism while there for a specific period while others studying in the same area of the country for the same amount of time experienced no racism. The commonality among all those who did not experience racism was that they participated in faculty-led study abroad trips. The experiences abroad with faculty seemed to significantly limit participants’ exposure to racism while abroad.

Findings from Research Questions

The researcher strove to understand the common participant experience by developing a composite definition of individuals’ experiences by answering “what” was experienced and then determining “how” they experienced it (see Moustakas, 1994). The results of the study showed various patterns based on the study abroad experience for African Americans and the factors influencing those experiences. The researcher identified four themes and 17 subthemes to specify

the factors influencing the African American study abroad experience. A full list of themes and subthemes are outlined in Table 10.

Table 10

Phenomenology Codebook: Themes, Codes, Definitions, Subthemes, and Appendix References

Themes	Codes	Definitions	Subthemes	Appendix References
Experiences around Race and Ethnicity Abroad	RAC EXPER	Interactions with host country locals that were driven by the participants' race or ethnicity.	Race & Host Country	Appendix F
			Racist Interactions with Americans	Appendix F
			Colorism	Appendix F
Community Influence	COMMUN	The ways participants' community (family and social supports) influenced their experience abroad.	Areas of Color	Appendix F
			Anti-Africa	Appendix G
			Combination of Support and Fear around Study Abroad	Appendix G
			Community Support	Appendix G
Financial Influences of Study Abroad	FIN	The influence of finances and funding on the study abroad experience.	Community Fear	Appendix G
			Pre-Departure Expenses	Appendix H
			In-country Expenses	Appendix H
Study Abroad Preparedness	PREP	How prepared a student felt to navigate the study abroad process and studying abroad.	Family Financial Support	Appendix H
			No/Limited Financial Support	Appendix H
			Faculty-Led Programs with African American Faculty	Appendix I
			In-country experiences	Appendix I
			African American Peer Guidance	Appendix I
			Limited Institutional Guidance	Appendix I
			Professor Support	Appendix I

This section outlines the research findings as they relate to each research question.

Outlining the findings by research question allows the researcher to capture the content around the phenomenon while analyzing how the findings addressed each research question. The first research question delves into the participants' lived experiences about studying abroad.

Research Question 1. RQ1 was the following: What were the lived study abroad experiences of African Americans? During the semi-structured interviews, the participants described their study abroad experiences and provided examples of their experiences. The

findings showed patterns concerning the interactions that the participants had with their host countries and what they experienced. With only 30% stating that they had a less than immersive experience with their host countries, most participants had immersive and interactive experiences with the people and cultures of their host countries. Therefore, the participants built bonds and made connections with locals within their communities abroad. More than one-third of the participants mentioned building relationships with locals, which they still maintained today, or building relationships with locals while abroad that were closer than their relationships with their White American study abroad peers.

Moreover, the participants' identities greatly influenced their study abroad experiences. With the exception of those who studied on the continent of Africa, specific experiences related to race and ethnicity were prevalent for many participants, with 73% noting an experience where they were ostracized or dehumanized by someone from their host countries because they were African American. Some examples included not being allowed to enter restaurants, clubs, or stores or being touched inappropriately by local men because they were African American. Additionally, 27% of participants noted negative encounters concerning their races with other American peers and professors while studying abroad.

While abroad, the participants juggled being away from their support systems, learning a new culture, functioning in a new language, and striving to excel academically. Because the participants also identified as African American, many managed this identity while combatting serious instances of racism and exclusion. For many years, African American students at many predominantly White American institutions reported regularly encountering *microinsults*, “verbal and nonverbal communications that subtly convey rudeness and insensitivity and demean a person's racial heritage or identity” (DeAngelis, 2009, p. 42); racial hostility; and *gaslighting*, “a

form of emotional abuse” that involves “manipulating a person by forcing them to question their thoughts, memories, and the events occurring around them” (Morris, 2017, p. 1) on their campuses. Many research participants discussed being able to cope with all their abroad experiences because they had to juggle similar situations in the United States. However, navigating these situations while in a foreign country and without the support of family and community members presented new challenges.

Annelle Primm, a nationally recognized cultural psychiatry expert, stated that many students of color suffered through instances of racism in silence (Anderson, 2020). Some participants who experienced racism discussed their experiences with peers, and most did not communicate their racist encounters with their study abroad coordinators or faculty members on the ground. Those who did were dismissed and told that their experiences were not racially motivated, causing further feelings of marginalization.

Eighty percent of the participants discussed building a community of support with local people of color and people of color within their study abroad cohort. Several participants mentioned traveling between six and eight hours to visit cities with locals of color. All but one participant who traveled to these areas of color within their host countries found out about these predominantly Black locations from White locals. They were told the following: “You will like it there,” “you will fit in there,” and “people who look like you are there.” The participants mentioned that in these areas, they felt “more at home,” “more sense of community,” and “welcomed.” One participant mentioned, “Now, I see why everyone keeps trying to push us to come here because this is the only place with Black people.” Another participant who traveled to a predominantly Black area of Latin America stated that although “they (the people of color in

the host country) have their own different culture and customs, we had that shared identity, which I think brought us together.”

Outside of these cities, towns, and villages of color, the participants were more visible than other study abroad students within their study abroad locations. In some locations, they were identified by locals based only on their skin color being referred to as “morena,” “negrita,” and “brown sugar.” These racially guided interactions served as constant reminders to the participants that they were different. Not only that they were different, but they were also more foreign than their White American peers. Racially charged instances, resulting in dehumanization and racism, had severe impacts on these college students’ mental health, especially where there was no structured support system in place.

The participants who studied in African countries or areas of their host countries with a predominant population of color had much more affirming experiences. In these areas, the participants stated that their experiences were positive and enriching; they stated that they were “welcomed with open arms,” and “it was one of the best experiences of my life.” One participant described, “I was very much accepted, and it was the first time in my life where I wasn’t an ‘other.’”

Moreover, one should consider the other side where students might excel when racism was excluded from their experiences to understand the educational implications of racist experiences. One student stated the following:

Interestingly enough, it was my best semester in college, I made the Dean's list. So even my academic performance improved in that setting. And I think that that speaks volumes, you know, because there were a lot of other barriers to overcome, that I think, would have made it understandable for me to maybe not get, you know, as high of a GPA as I

had gotten before, you know, being in a new country [in Africa], and having all these different professors, you know, getting used to a different curriculum.

The African Americans who visited areas with a larger population of locals of color had more accepting and inclusive experiences. Other majority White areas were at best not overtly racist and, at worst, dangerous and dehumanizing for the participants. Appendix F shows the specific quotes from the participants, highlighting their experiences abroad.

Research Questions 2 and 3. RQ2 was the following: To what extent did familial factors influence African Americans' study abroad experience? RQ3 was the following: To what extent did social factors influence African Americans' study abroad experience? Both research questions addressed the influence of family and community on the participants' study abroad experiences. Just under 50% of participants noted that they had family opposition or fear when planning to study abroad. However, 76% of families and communities supported the decision to travel abroad. Although many families were concerned for the participants' safety while going abroad, they were also happy that the participants could have an international experience. Only two participants had family and community opposition that would not help them or provide support until within several weeks of travelling abroad.

Many family members ensured that the participants could travel abroad. One participant mentioned the following:

My mom was very adamant about making sure that I was able to get to go. She didn't care what she was going to have to do she was going to make sure I was going to be able to go because she thinks it's very important to do stuff like that.

Others said the following:

1. People were very supportive. A lot of people; I think we're kind of proud because like, oh, yeah, you know, small town girl goes to wherever.
2. Traveling abroad and kind of just experiencing life outside of the United States is something that my mother is very keen on me doing just in the safest way that I possibly can.
3. I didn't have parents that were scared and telling me not to do it or friends that were like you're gonna miss you know all this happening at school. I didn't have any of that that was significant enough for me to reconsider my, my decision.
4. I had family members like “why do you have to go so far” but I know I was blessed. I didn't really have any opposition to go into study abroad from my family and friends.

Most families and communities were happy that participants could abroad and concerned for their safety. One participant stated, “I told my mom that I wanted to study abroad, she was all for it, but her being a single mom, she was definitely concerned about like is it going to be safe where am I going.” Another mentioned,

I think it was like a mixture. I think they were more so excited. I know my mom was just because she'd never really got to travel. At least she never got to study abroad so it was something that she was really happy that I can do.

For several participants, although they had support and could go abroad, they knew others who had less supportive families, and some could not travel abroad. One mentioned, “I knew that some of my other friends who wanted to do this, did have some opposition.” Those participants who received opposition from their family and community about studying abroad were told, “They don't like Black people over there.” Others stated,

I know a lot of associates thought I was trying to be White, trying to assimilate—Why are you trying to you know be somebody you're not? Like, Black people don't travel. Why do you think you're supposed to go to Mexico? You know, and that was a very, very, very common response.

Some family members believed they were trying to “be White.” One participant mentioned,

When I said I wanted to go they (parents) were terrified of course. Terrified to the point where for the first week, they actually came with me [to Latin America], they flew over. And they were present on the first half of the first day [of orientation] they came with us just kind of get a feel and then they explored there just to make sure they felt comfortable with it but they were not super excited.

Some families also preferred that the participants traveled to Europe over Latin American countries, assuming that these countries would offer a safer environment. One participant stated,

Now that we're talking about like how your parents felt, I don't think they wanted me to go there (Latin America) because there was this idea that it would be more dangerous, that there might be more instability. So, I feel like going to Europe, I was there because it made my parents feel like I was safer.

The participants who studied in Africa and the Middle East encountered anti-African and anti-Middle Eastern sentiments from either their families or communities before traveling abroad. Regarding an experience in Africa, one participant stated, “I would tell other people I was going to West Africa and they'd be like, Oh, you're gonna be in huts, or you're not gonna be wearing shoes or you gonna see zebras.” Another stated,

When I first told them about it, they were like, you're not going to Israel. So, that kind of made me think like, okay, if my parents are telling me no maybe I shouldn't go, because I feel like they always know what's best for me.

Despite the opposition, these students made the decision to go abroad, understanding it would benefit them personally. One stated,

It's not that I went there (Africa), believing that (negative comments from others). I think I always believed in my heart that there was more [than how it is portrayed in the United States], and I was fortunate to have an upbringing of people that had also traveled on seeing other parts of the world, and just were aware of that element of propaganda to educate me otherwise.

Participant quotes on the social and familial factors that influenced their study abroad experience are outlined in Appendix G.

Research Question 4. RQ4 was the following: To what extent did financial factors influence African Americans' study abroad experience? The participants identified how financial factors influenced their study abroad experiences. Fourteen of the 17 participants had to consider finances when making decisions about studying abroad. Whether that was deciding if they could afford to go abroad, which study abroad programs they could afford, or managing their finances while abroad, 82% of participants had to manage the financial implications of their decisions to study abroad. Although finances played a role in most participants making decisions around study abroad, the way finances influenced decision making varied.

Most participants relied on parents to fill in the financial gaps needed to fund their experiences abroad, while some believed that they should pay for their experiences abroad. Those who relied on parents stated,

I was blessed in that my parents kind of threw pretty much all of their resources behind my brother and I and our educational pursuits. So, you know, coming back with an idea of anything educational was fully accepted and, you know, by the grace of God we had the resources to do that.

Another stated, “I personally didn't have the funds. But again, my family stepped in and made sure that that was able to happen.”

Some students stated their need to pay for their experiences abroad because their parents did not approve of their decisions. For example, one participant said,

Because there was a part of me that knew that my parents weren't completely elated about it (study abroad) I wanted to find a way to fund it myself. So, I worked a good number of hours, pretty much working every day. I had class but I was working and then I also had a scholarship that was able to fund the rest of it.

One participant whose parents were not in favor of study abroad stated,

When it first started everybody was like, “Well, I'm not helping pay for it because I don't want you to go.” So, at the time I was working. So, we had payment plans where we had to pay probably like \$500 a month. So, I worked so I ended up like paying my part, then refund checks hit the accounts. So, I used a little bit of my refund money to help me go on this trip.

There were also others who believed they needed to fund their study abroad themselves because their parents already paid their tuition. One person stated,

I did as much as I could to get like scholarships and grants, but then also I had savings. I'm sure my parents helped me as well, but I was not wanting to just ask. My parents are already paying for my sister and I to go to college ... That's enough. They're already

helping us, and I had student loans, I had financial aid. So, I used financial aid to help when I could, when it was available.

Research Question 5. RQ5 was the following: What contributed to African Americans' level of preparedness for their study abroad experience? Administrators should determine the resources that supported students preparing for their experiences abroad. When asked to provide examples of what contributed to their being prepared to study abroad various factors were expressed. The first factor was the role of faculty. The participants who attended faculty-led excursions abroad seemed the most prepared for their study abroad experience, particularly for those who went to the same country as the faculty.

These participants noted,

And it was really great to have someone who was so knowledgeable about the land because that was his home. And he even took us to his hometown [in Africa]. And just, it made the experience that much richer, because it wasn't just someone that was knowledgeable from things that they had seen or heard in a book or had learned second hand.

Another stated,

She (the professor) really prepared us. She made sure we knew the money; we knew small phrases to be able to make sure we found our way around [the African country] without her. She even gave us some baseline ones (phrases) and then we were able to ask other ones. We were able to practice them, we practiced them with her. She had us prepare for the weather for all the different excursions or whatever that we were going to be doing. I felt very prepared thanks to her.

Another participant said,

I felt very prepared. We spent months in advance of the trip meeting the two professors that were in charge of this group and then the 16 students. We met regularly for several months beforehand talking about what the experience would be like, the thing that we needed to have in order prior to going [to Latin America] and the things that we needed to do while on the trip.

Furthermore, another participant stated that the experience abroad would have been different without the expertise and guidance of the professors:

Both of the professors that accompanied us had been doing the program for several years. So, I appreciate the fact that they were very familiar with the [Latin American] country and the state that we were visiting in. I think it would have been difficult to know what would have been most beneficial in terms of cultural education, outside of just being in the classroom. I think that piece would have been difficult to navigate on our own, or on my own.

Although incidents of racism experienced on faculty-led trips were less common than those experienced in traditional study abroad programs, these faculty-led experiences were not all incident-free. The participants who traveled abroad with African American faculty seemed to have an experience where faculty took ownership and responsibility for their experience. Although when traveling with faculty who were not African American, the participants felt less prepared, and their professors were unprepared to unpack their experiences with race. For example, one participant stated,

When we get there (London) I had on yoga pants and a short sleeve shirt. Well, it's still cold in London, the first of July. So, everybody, we're all like trying to find somewhere to buy coats because we are from Mississippi where it's hot all the time. So, that's something

that the teachers that took us, I'm pretty sure they had been there before. That wasn't their first trip. I feel like they should have communicated, "Hey, it's burning up here in Mississippi, and humid. But it's nothing like that in London. So, you know, you may want to prepare as you pack because again, we had to buy clothes."

Another participant discussed her experience saying,

I did feel like I wasn't accepted when I got there (Middle East) just because of what I look like. And we had a tour guide that actually worked at the museum. And I know my professors didn't feel it because they are Caucasian so they weren't catching what the tour guy would say. And all of us were African American. And he explained and it's just like everything he said, to me, to everybody, to all of us, it was racist, it was very racist. But the professors, they didn't say anything about it. And I felt maybe because they didn't get it. But it was so racist and like literally all of us felt the racism every time the tour guide would speak.

The participants who traveled abroad with faculty of color also had a more intentional experience abroad. The faculty of color took students to areas of the visited countries with higher concentrations of locals of color after spending time in the United States exploring the history of these populations. When reflecting on their experience abroad, one participant noted,

For Black students, I think it will be helpful to know the history of Black people in the country where they're studying. I think honestly that's the biggest thing. That's one reason that we went and studied on the coast where there were more Black Mexicans.

Additionally, many participants felt not only unprepared financially but were also unaware of the particulars about their accommodations, school or university environment, and local culture. A participant stated,

When we got to our host family, we actually found that there were like other students from other institutions that were also staying with our family. So that was an interesting piece we didn't know that before we got there, that some of them were sharing rooms with us. We were not prepared.

One participant mentioned, “My understanding with the program, was very much different from what I got when I got there.” Another participant stated the following:

I definitely thought it was going to be at more of a university. I thought I was going to be interacting with more Venezuelan university students, which I interacted with them but the program and the building that it was in was like exclusively our study abroad program, and then relatively well-off Venezuelans that were trying to learn English of all ages. Most of them were not college age. I feel like I wasn't particularly prepared. I definitely could have known more and might have been able to capitalize more. If I had known more...

The participants who spoke to other study abroad students of color who had studied in their host country before leaving the United States also felt prepared. One said,

I mean, even the people who I had spoken to, at least one of them was a person of color. She told me about her experience of being there in Copenhagen and what to expect. Or at least like from what her experience was like, what she experienced and telling me what that was like and then she literally was just like “this is what you can expect when you go over there.” So, I felt as prepared as I possibly could be going abroad into a new country and a new social atmosphere.

Another participant made an informed decision about where to study abroad because of her conversation with an African American peer who had studied abroad:

I wanted to go to Spain because my minor was Spanish. But then when I talk to some Black people that had been, they were like they don't like Black people over there. And then I got scared because I can speak Spanish and of course better now than I could then. But at the time I was scared I was gonna get lost somewhere and somebody was gonna be ugly to me. So, I decided to study in London.

The time speaking with peers provided participants with the information and confidence needed to feel like they could make more informed decisions about going abroad.

Those who did receive preparation and predeparture orientations underscored a lack of information about what they could experience abroad as African Americans. Some even received information on being a woman in their country of study, but not a person of color. One participant mentioned,

So, they gave us a list of stuff not to wear so that we wouldn't be harassed and cat called, that was really the extent of it. So, they said like, "Okay, if you're bringing shorts they can't be above this length; if you're bringing a dress it needs to be this and it needs to have this kind of thing." And that was all the woman. There was no specific Black anything. But there were also no Black people involved in the trip. So, there's that as well. The administrators and the advisors that were on the trip with us were also not Black at all ... I don't think they prepared us specifically as Black students going because I don't even think they knew that that was a different experience.

Lack of compositional diversity and understanding of global anti-Blackness resulted in many African American students going abroad unprepared for their experiences.

Only 53% of participants had a predeparture meeting or orientation session before going abroad. Several students noted not having a study abroad office; thus, they managed the entire

study abroad process on their own. Others noted having a study abroad office unwilling to provide them with assistance. One participant mentioned,

I remember going there, and like nobody helped at all. And I don't know if it's because they didn't think I was serious, or because they didn't think I'd be able to afford it or what. But I remember going there and just kind of getting like "ok well just grab a brochure" you know. And like, ciao, thanks for stopping by. But there was no, "Ok, tell me what your interests are, what are you thinking about studying, like let's see what place would be a good fit for you." Like there was no dialogue whatsoever about that. It was just like, "alright well you know, you're on your own."

Resources available to students varied greatly across institutions. Students attending different institutions but traveling abroad through the same partner programs received varying levels of preparation before arriving in their host countries. Understanding and applying more consistent and thorough measures of preparation could benefit students by allowing them to be better prepared to get the most out of their experiences abroad (see Appendix I).

Relationship to Literature

Utilizing the phenomenological approach offered the researcher rich descriptions of the study abroad experiences of African Americans, several of which have not been highlighted by researchers to date. This approach provided the depth of insight needed to extract the emotional, psychological, and physical detail around various participant experiences that is often overlooked in other research on the African American study abroad experience.

Researchers found that study abroad can be the catalyst for global and cultural awareness and increased academic success (Kuh, 2009; Lebold et al., 2005; Penn & Tanner, 2009). The qualitative data collected in this research study supports this idea, but within specific contexts.

For example, all participants stated that their experiences abroad increased their global awareness or understanding of how people around the world are connected. Also, prior to their study abroad, only 6% of participants lived abroad or traveled extensively outside of the United States. Following their study abroad, that number increased to 65% who lived abroad or traveled extensively outside of the United States. However, in terms of increased academic success, only one student attributed increased academic success specifically to the experience abroad, and this student was one of the two participants who studied in Africa. Both students who studied in Africa reported having positive experiences where they felt welcomed and accepted. One stated,

I felt like I fit in, even though I wasn't from there. And I felt very much accepted and welcomed. And interestingly enough, it was my best semester in college, I made the Dean's list. So even my academic performance improved in that setting. And I think that that speaks volumes, you know, because there were a lot of other barriers to overcome, that I think, would have made it understandable for me to maybe not get, you know, as high of a GPA as I had gotten before, you know, being in a new country, and having all these different professors, you know, getting used to a different curriculum.

Not every student reported instances of increased academic success. However, the participant who did report success specifically attributed it to her positive cultural experience abroad.

All 17 participants recommended study abroad based on the cultural awareness, language acquisition, exposure to new ideas, and overall development that took place while they were abroad. Participants made the following statements:

1. One [benefit was] getting better control of the language that I was studying because I was studying Spanish at that time, so that was definitely helpful. Learning to live with people who are different than you and who are used to doing things differently.

2. [The pandemic] really strengthened my view of the importance of [study abroad] because it's so important to learn about people who are different from ourselves. And in learning about people who are different from ourselves, we learn how not to judge people who are different from ourselves. Just because their public transportation system isn't as good as ours, or as functional doesn't necessarily mean that they are less than us. And we really need to work on changing that perception.
3. I didn't know any Spanish prior to going. And by the time I left I was conversational. And it happens pretty quickly. If you hang out with the locals and you have friends there and they're trying to learn English as much as you're trying to learn, whatever that language is. So just be mindful of that and as much as they're getting something from you, make sure you get something from them.
4. So one thing that was very interesting to me is that all this multitasking that we tend to do over in the states, it's not like that there. It was a refreshing surprise. And, like, they had to school me a little bit on this. But I remember working at the refuge, and lunchtime would roll around, and the fact that my superiors were not also trying to answer phones, catch up on work, you know, write something, or do whatever, was mind boggling to me. But they're like, no, we sit and eat. We enjoy our food, we have lunch, if you want to go outside, you can do that. And their lunch was an hour, like a legit hour, of just whatever you wanted it to be. It was that, that part of the experience was really wonderful. It gave me hope to see other people living that way. Because I think that also when you don't know anything different, you may not really call it into question; but it is possible. People are still very, very much productive.

African American students are also unprepared for the racist and discriminatory interactions they can and likely will face when traveling abroad to predominantly White countries (Goldoni, 2017). This is confirmed by the data collected in the study, where more than 70% of participants had negative racially-driven experiences while studying abroad. Additionally, participants were underprepared for the financial implications of their decision to study abroad. Researchers suggest that limited financial means and forgone earnings impact intent to study abroad (Fry & Brux, 2009; Raby, 2006; Rhoads & Szelenyi, 2011). This study substantiates this claim, with 82% of participants having to consider finances when deciding to study abroad and approximately one-third of participants needing financial assistance while studying abroad. The findings of this study aligned with the literature about the African American study abroad experience. Much of the literature on African Americans and study abroad indicated that financial factors were the most prevalent causes for lack of participation in studying abroad for African American students (Kasravi, 2009). This research showed that this finding was accurate; however, there were many different types of financial factors influencing the decision to study abroad, and the nuances of these various factors were important. Although most participants reported financial factors influencing their study abroad experiences, 18% did not have financial restrictions for their experiences abroad.

Social and familial concerns were noted in the literature (Fry & Brux, 2009; Raby, 2006; Rhoads & Szelenyi, 2011; Salisbury et al., 2011), confirmed in the needs assessment, and encountered again through the phenomenological research as a critical factor influencing study abroad intent. Specifically, African Americans noted family disapproval as a factor impacting their decision to study abroad (Fry & Brux, 2009; Kasravi, 2009). The findings from this study confirmed that family and community were significant influencers when deciding to study

abroad. Students who did not receive support from their community or family were hesitant about moving forward with their plans to travel abroad and required intervention from professors or friends to convince them, their families, or their communities.

Although data gathered in this study strongly suggest that familial and social factors greatly impacted the decision to study abroad, 76% of participants noted having family who supported them and their decision to study abroad, with almost half having family and community members concerned for their safety. The inference drawn from this finding is that although families, communities, and support systems around participants were concerned about them traveling abroad, most were still supportive of their decision to study abroad.

Some literature indicated that faculty-led study abroad partnerships were essential to providing more students with study abroad exposure to assess the implications of this idea (Kasravi, 2009). Although most participants on faculty-led study abroad trips were best prepared for what they would experience abroad, this aspect was only the case for trips led by African American faculty. These findings did not support literature that indicated that faculty were the key to improved study abroad outcomes.

Much of the literature available on the African American study abroad experiences states that African American students continue to be unprepared for their experiences abroad. Researchers posit that many African Americans lack information about study abroad opportunities (Fry & Brux, 2009). Correspondingly, the data collected in this study supports this notion, with participants noting a lack of visibility, unengaged study abroad offices, limited pre-departure orientations, and feeling dismissed by study abroad administrators.

In addition to the financial, racial, and community influences of study abroad, researchers suggest that many African Americans do not see the connection between their career targets and

study abroad (Fry & Brux, 2009; Kasravi, 2009). This may have been true while studying abroad, given several participants noted wishing they had been more intentional about aligning their career and study abroad goals before getting abroad. However, following their study abroad experience, all but one participant stated that their time abroad positively influenced their employability. Moreover, 59% of participants stated that they used skillsets or languages learned while abroad to obtain employment or within their current employment roles.

Relationship to Critical Race Theory

Researchers of CRT focus theoretical attention on “studying and transforming the relationship between race, racism, and power” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p. 3). Race and racism are deeply embedded within the framework of American society (Parker & Lynn, 2002) and shaped the American legal system and the ways people think about the law, racial categories, and privilege (Harris, 2012). According to Parker and Lynn (2002), CRT has three main goals. Its first goal is to present stories about discrimination from the perspective of people of color. These may be qualitative case studies of descriptions and interviews. These cases may then be drawn together to build cases against racially biased officials or discriminatory practices. Because many stories advance White privilege through “majoritarian” master narratives, counter stories by people of color can shatter the complacency that may accompany such privilege and challenge the dominant discourses that serve to suppress people on the margins of society (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002).

As a second goal, researchers of CRT argue for the eradication of racial subjugation while recognizing that race is neither genetic nor biological but rather a social invention central to constraining people of color within a society (Gillborn, 2015; Parker & Lynn, 2002). In this

view, race is not a fixed designation but is continually shaped by political pressures and informed by individuals' lived experiences. This tenant of CRT is referred to as social construction.

Through interactions with the immediate surroundings and community, individuals are shown their place in society and how they should act and be treated (Parker & Lynn, 2002). One way this issue was demonstrated in the study abroad experiences of several participants was how they were treated based on the color of their skin or the hue of their skin. This is a concept known as colorism, first coined by Alice Walker in 1983. Colorism is defined as preferential or prejudicial treatment of people of the same race based solely on the hue of one's skin, where lighter skin tones are favored over darker skin tones. Therefore, skin hue is used to determine one's beauty, worth, and dignity (Joshi et al., 2017; Monroe & Hall, 2018; Walker, 1983).

Colorism is not unique to the United States but is practiced in many places all around the world (Tharps, 2016). Research shows that skin tone and other racial features play an important role in decisions made around the globe (Tharps, 2016). These factors determine employment opportunities, who is charged with criminal offenses, and which politicians get elected (Vedantam, 2010). A study conducted at the University of Georgia showed that employers of all races preferred lighter skinned Black men to darker skinned Black men, regardless of their qualifications (Harrison, 2005). The researcher found that hue took precedence over education when assessing job applicants (Harrison, 2005).

The participants noted that they received different treatment in various countries around the world based on the hue of their skin. Those with lighter skin tones were given preferential treatment in some instances to those with darker skin tones. Issues ranged from admission into establishments such as restaurants and night clubs, to being allowed to purchase goods.

Finally, the third goal of CRT addresses other areas of difference, such as gender, class, and any inequities experienced by individuals. As Parker and Lynn (2002) commented, “In the case of Black women, race does not exist outside of gender and gender does not exist outside of race” (p. 12). In research, the use of CRT methodology presupposes that race and racism are at the forefront of all participant experiences and challenges traditional research theories used to explain the experiences of people of color in the U.S.

Implications for Practice

The findings from this research underscore several implications for future practice that support working with African American study abroad students. They are foundational, pre-departure, institutional, community, and financial implications, as well as ally-ship and support. Combining needs assessment and phenomenological data, the researcher offers insights into the study abroad experiences that can aid study abroad administrators, financial aid administrators, and college and university senior leadership. The findings of this study can be leveraged to create a more supportive and holistic study abroad experience for all college and university students. The following subsection outlines these implications and provides recommendations for practitioners.

Foundational implications. To set a foundation for making study abroad available and accessible to all students, it is essential to increase the visibility of study abroad on campus. Without awareness of study abroad opportunities, it is impossible to participate in study abroad. Also, all participants who received guidance from another African American student who had studied in their host country prior to going abroad felt more prepared for their study abroad experience. Therefore, it is important to connect African American students who have studied

abroad to African American students planning to study abroad in the same host country. This provides students with a system of support before leaving the U.S.

Additionally, many participants stated that they did not have the opportunity to unpack their study abroad experience until participating in this research study. Given that the majority of participants studied abroad between 11 and 20 years ago, it would be beneficial to develop opportunities for African American students to unpack their experience abroad with other study abroad students upon re-entry into the United States. Along those lines, another recommendation is to utilize study abroad students as study abroad ambassadors and provide a structured framework for students to share their experiences and insights regarding study abroad.

Aligning with the literature, heritage study abroad programs are also important for African American students. Heritage programs are study abroad programs selected by students based on their ancestry. For example, a Korean-American student may study in Korea because their grandparents were born there. With the majority of study abroad programs located in Europe, this greatly limits non-European students' ability to participate in heritage programs. Varying program offerings to provide study abroad options around the world could appeal to a more diverse population of students.

Pre-departure implications. Furthermore, it is essential that all students have a pre-departure orientation prior to traveling abroad. These orientations should inform students about their host country, including the political climate, culture, and historical context of their host country. Also, practitioners should ensure students have the language skills needed to navigate their host country.

It is also critical to provide students with specific logistical information around their

experience abroad. For example, will students be living with a host family? Will they have roommates from another institution? Planning should also incorporate other students of color who have gone abroad into pre-departure orientations and marketing materials.

Additionally, with so many participants noting experiences around their identity as African Americans, informing students of how people with a similar identity, ethnicity, or race are treated in their host country is essential to establishing awareness of how they can be received while abroad. This is important not only for African American students but for all study abroad students and faculty taking students abroad. Many participants noted experiences they identified as racist in the presence of White peers and faculty members. Therefore, teaching all students and faculty to serve as allies and advocates while abroad is key.

Institutional implications. Institutional implications for practice include investing in the study abroad office or developing a study abroad office for institutions without a study abroad office. This reflects an institutional commitment to international education. An additional implication is investing in cultural competency training for all practitioners to improve their skillsets around preparing diverse students to go abroad. This training encourages administrators to understand the preconceptions and biases brought to study abroad and how this could impact student interactions.

Institutional stakeholders also need to be willing to collaborate across institutions and departments within the same institution. Cross-institutional collaboration can increase study abroad program options for students, ultimately leading to increased participation. Also, utilizing the skillsets of institutional stakeholders can provide students the opportunity to take full advantage of their experiences abroad. For example, collaborating with an institutional

career center can help students think about the skillsets they can gain from their experiences abroad.

When asked if their experiences abroad influenced their employability, 94% of the participants stated that it had affected them. When discussing how studying abroad impacted employability, several participants wished that they had been more intentional about aligning their experiences abroad to their careers and taken better advantage of those networks.

Several participants could apply what they had learned to potential work positions and were told by employers that their experiences abroad and articulation of how that experience related to their job of interest was why they received job offers. One participant said,

I think it (study abroad) influenced it (employability) a lot based on what those who hired me said. When I worked at *Newsweek* magazine, I was a marketing, so this was before I transitioned into higher ed. And my then supervisor told me that one of the reasons why I got the position was because I could articulate my study abroad experience to the job that I was applying for which I guess we were, me and the other candidate, were really close. And like, oh, how am I going to choose between the two. And that's what won it over was not only did I study abroad and not only did I share that experience, but I connected it specifically to that job.

Another participant stated,

When I went to this daycare that I applied to. I told him that I had an experience where I was in Israel and you know, I learned with the kids and we did certain materials and I can just say that, you know, our kids how we have, like the United States, we have a lot more resources than what they had and I was just, I felt like it really helped me during the interview because just to compare to both, knowing that I was in Israel doing this, now

I'm in the United States and I know what they may have or what they may not have. I felt like that was kind of like a boost to really help me manage that, not internship, but job.

So, I feel like that really helped me a lot.

These examples underscore the impact articulating a study abroad experience can have on employability. Collaborating across departments to teach students how to highlight their study abroad experiences is beneficial for students and higher education career services professionals as they train and equip students with the skills needed for employment.

Community implications. Understanding how communities influence African American students' intent to study abroad is essential to increasing study abroad participation. Practitioners should have a sense of students' needs and fears around study abroad to help reconcile them when possible. Also, study abroad administrators are uniquely situated to help students inform their families about study abroad and develop partnerships with families and communities to establish study abroad buy-in. Tapping into this expertise and knowledge to help students navigate the community influence can result in increased study abroad advocacy from both students and their communities.

Financial implications. The findings from the needs assessment and phenomenological research regarding finances suggest that all students need guidance to understand and access the financial resources available for study abroad. The phenomenological findings indicated that African American students needed not only financial resources and information regarding getting abroad but also a detailed understanding of their financial needs and obligations while abroad. As practitioners continue to work with students and advise them on funding their education abroad, there also needs to be consideration for not only the financial needs to get students abroad but also money management and tools while abroad. One issue regarding finances was

participants' sense of how much money was needed while abroad. Requesting that students report actual spending budgets following their study abroad can aid future students as they assess the financial implications of study abroad.

One participant stated, "One thing that I was not made aware of is like how much you should have personally save[d] when you go abroad." Others said, "I definitely could have prepared better for like money management while abroad. Because there were times when I was definitely calling home like, 'So, I need your help,'" and "I had worked that full summer, I think I probably had like two jobs the summer prior." One participant stated,

I was somewhat prepared. And I had a backup plan but definitely could have had a more realistic view about how much money I would spend outside of just, you know, tuition and, in light, you know excursions and shopping experiences.

Another stated,

My parents were like "okay we're gonna pay for your education, but you figure out the rest." So, I worked, and I saved up my little bit of money. I think I went to Spain with like \$2,000 which if I was living on campus in America, that's a good amount of money to get me through a semester, maybe even a year. But abroad, alone, that's nothing right. So, I went over there with this false sense of actually what I had in my pocket.

With approximately 30% of the participants providing examples of needing funds while abroad, this area is critical to the study abroad experience. Because finances play a significant role in determining whether the participants could take advantage of study abroad, administrators should provide information for what is needed not only to get abroad but also while abroad. One participant stated, "I was essentially living poor, I was poor." Therefore, lacking finances abroad can then lead to a student being in an extremely dangerous situation away from their support

network. Lacking finances abroad can result in an inability to eat, travel to and from school, achieve academically, and participate in many of the critical and developmental excursions while abroad. These excursions are often what lead to opportunities for learning skills, such as problem-solving, decision-making, and independence, which can be where strong relationships are formed and is critical to experiencing new cultures.

When discussing the danger of lacking finances abroad, one participant said the following:

When Black kids get up there with no money the experience is completely different, you know. Traveling the bus every single day, it's just everything becomes exacerbated because they're alone. They don't really have any friends. Money transferring takes a while, credit cards shut down at any given moment because you're making too many charges abroad, debit and checking cards shut down. So, it's like these are all really real realities that of course disproportionately impact those who don't have the resources.

Furthermore, institutions should prioritize securing institutional funds and establishing strategic partnerships to send students abroad. Also, practitioners should discuss study abroad scholarship options with students, including short term program scholarships. Several participants noted not being eligible for scholarships because they were not going abroad for a full semester. However, they were not going abroad for a semester due to cost. Similarly, receiving academic credit traditionally increases the cost of study abroad, while not receiving credit increases the time needed for degree completion, thereby increasing the educational cost. Identifying the gaps would benefit students as they manage the financial investment of study abroad.

Ally-ship and support. White students and faculty need to be aware of the different experiences that many students of color face abroad, so they can serve as allies and supports. Several participants noted instances of racism while abroad initiated by their American peers or professors. For example, a student said, “I didn't have any issues [with the host culture]. The racism that I encountered was from teachers from my school.” Another stated the following:

Some other students from other institutions were racist and would kind of say comments and there was one point. The other students or students from the other school were teaching the host family some racial things like what like racist things and like in America, Black people are like this, in America, Black people are like this.

A further student said the following:

I did feel like I wasn't accepted, like I said when I got there just because of what I look like. And a lot of my professors didn't feel it because they are Caucasian so they weren't catching what the tour guy would say in a lot of all of us was literally African American. But the professors, they didn't say anything about it. And I felt maybe because they didn't get it. But it was so racist and like literally all of us felt the racism, of every time the tour guide would speak. I feel like the whole trip is kind of very racist. But I learned from it.

Some students experienced instances of racism while White students were present; however, because students were unaware of those experiences or chose to ignore them, they could not act as allies or support for the African Americans present. One participant stated the following:

I guess she (local woman at a market) assumed that I didn't speak Spanish, so she was saying how she didn't want me to buy from her because I didn't have money. Then the other woman was the other girl asked her why and she was like, because she's Black. I

know she doesn't have the money. One of the [White students in the study abroad cohort] was like, "I don't get it. She didn't think you have money? Why would that be?"

Another participant commented the following:

For me because I'm coming with my own lived experience and perspective, I have a different understanding of that. I wasn't aware of how much being a Black American person makes me hyper aware, or hypersensitive to certain things. So, there's certain situations that we, I can be in with someone else. And I'm viewing it from a completely different lens because I'm coming with my Black American experience.

One darker skinned participant explained the following:

"Nope, he can't come in." And I'll never forget that day. It was like, there is something distinct about me and that part was hard ... There's something distinct about me that's not likable and not acceptable, you know. That part, that really messed with my head. Even between me and another person in the diaspora. So yeah, there was definitely colorism.

Additionally, a participant stated the following:

Maybe some of it (racism) was being African and I'm American. But I have African features. And so, I would be called all sorts of names. And so, developing as a man, it was like I was developing these insecurities about who I was, and I had nowhere to seek comfort.

One participant explained a similar situation:

And so, there were probably 18 of us total, and I'm the only Black person, there was [a young lady] who was Puerto Rican. Everybody else was White, and I was maybe 14th in line. I was definitely towards the very end, but I know there was at least one guy behind me, and all the students they showed their ID, flash their ID, the guard just let them in.

The guard was as dark as I [was], but he was Mexican right, he wasn't Black, he was just a brown skinned Mexican. And they (White students) flashed their ID. Go on, didn't have a discussion with him—nothing. All of these 14 people went ahead of me, then it's my turn. I showed my student ID, and I'm clearly with this group, I showed my ID, and he wouldn't let me in. He's just like, “oh no, I don't think this is real” and like going back and forth with me and telling me that I couldn't be a student. I'm not a student, there's no way that I'm a student with this group. And my friend who was the Puerto Rican girl was behind me in line and she's looking like are you kidding. And then the program guide came because everyone else had already gone ahead and she came back, like starts yelling at him like what's the problem she's obviously with this group; he eventually let me in. And this [White] guy who was studying with us, he was behind me. And he got through and he came up to me and he's like "Wow, that was strange huh?" Like, yeah, that's one way to put it. It was very strange.

Anderson (2020) posited the following about similar situations:

Dealing with regular microaggressions and overt acts of racism on an individual level, while also living through the constant debates and discussions of systemic and institutional racism, can be sources of pain, trauma and stress. For some students, it can also lead to more serious conditions such as anxiety and depression and leave them feeling hopeless that things will improve. (p. 20)

Understanding the emotional, social, and psychological impact of these experiences on U.S. students should compel institutional leaders to make every effort to implement systemic change to provide safe educational experiences abroad for diverse students.

All participants were asked to provide recommendations for study abroad practitioners regarding preparing students for their study abroad experience. These implications and recommendations for practice will be outlined in two sections. The first section will review the overall recommendations for practitioners to consider when sending students abroad, followed by specific recommendations for sending African American students abroad. Appendix D and Appendix E outline the participant recommendations for study abroad students and practitioners.

Limitations

Although this study offered insights for practitioners as to how to best support African American students as they explored studying abroad, there were several limitations. These limitations included lack of diversity and sample size. This section outlines each limitation and offers recommendations for how to address these limitations in future research.

This researcher explored the African American study abroad experience, but the sample was limited in racial diversity. Therefore, the study is limited in transferability to other populations at the intersection of race and study abroad. However, this study might be more easily transferred to other populations underrepresented in study abroad. Future researchers could utilize phenomenological research methods to analyze the study abroad experience for other underrepresented populations, which could be followed by a mixed methods study to understand better the intersection of race and experience for various populations.

Additionally, the sample size for this study consisted of 17 participants. The phenomenological design recommends between five and 25 participants (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017; McMillan, 2004; Polkinghorne, 1989). Although the sample size was sufficient for this research design, these 17 participants could not adequately represent a broader population (see

Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2017). Additional researchers using a mixed methodology might allow for an increased number of participants and thus increase generalizability.

Furthering the Research

Much of the literature on barriers impacting African Americans' ability to travel abroad suggests that lack of finances is a leading factor. For further study, the researcher would propose free study abroad opportunities for all students utilizing the various funding sources available on campus and additional external funding sources. Providing free study abroad opportunities would eliminate financial barriers and ensure financial equity and access across study abroad programs. Eliminating this financial barrier could result in added benefits for African American students and greater possibilities academically, professionally, and personally.

All higher education institution leaders should understand the benefits of study abroad, particularly those servicing African American students. There are limited studies addressing study abroad outcomes for African American students; however, researchers suggest that there is a significant relationship between study abroad and academic success (Lebold et al., 2005; Redden, 2010). The outcomes include higher grade point averages, graduation rates, and acceptance to graduate and professional schools over peers without international experiences (Lebold et al., 2005; Redden, 2010).

Another recommendation for future research is understanding the role that peer guidance, influence, and mentorship has on African American students in study abroad. Strategic mentorship can provide students with a community of support with a shared experience of studying abroad. Systemically, African American mentorship in study abroad establishes a precedent of equity and contributes to the brand awareness of study abroad amongst the university community. Intentional mentor relationships characterized by proactive interventions

are believed to create powerful retention and academic outcomes (Colton, Connor, Shultz, & Easter, 1999; Levin & Levin, 1991; Tinto, 1993). Researchers suggest that customized mentorship programs are successful due to the intentionality implemented to meet specific student needs. African American students historically underutilize support services (Jones, 1992; Tinto, 1993). Unintentional programs or those geared toward student-initiated contacts have been found to be less impactful with students of color (Levin & Levin, 1991; Robert & Thomson, 1994). Because African American students often struggle with being ashamed to seek assistance, a program with built-in support eliminating the need to seek out help will provide needed resources for students without added embarrassment (Robert & Thompson, 1994).

The many facets of study abroad make international education an ideal platform for introducing mentorship relationships. For many students, the prospect of studying abroad invokes feelings of excitement and anticipation, as well as fear and anxiety. Living and studying in another country is an experience that sends students headfirst into a tidal wave of the unknown. Everything they were accustomed to before their arrival abroad was no longer the norm, which created many opportunities for growth and development that traditional education did not provide.

There is limited literature on the racialized experiences of African Americans while they are abroad. Given that most participants reported instances of racism, ranging from stares and not being allowed into spaces abroad to degradation leaving lingering emotional and psychological scars, more literature should show these experiences. These racist encounters and hostile climates can be detrimental to African American students' education (Anderson, 2020).

Although many had traumatizing and demeaning experiences while abroad, all participants recommended study abroad. Further research to explore what made participants stay and endure the trauma and how those traumas impacted their mental health is important.

Because of the influence of colorism on so many experiences, it is possible that other communities of color may have similar experiences abroad. It is important to highlight all experiences of marginalization during study abroad in the hopes that practitioners can develop resources to support a larger population of students. Although all of the participants in this study recommended study abroad, it is important to delve deeper into the influence of negative African American peer experiences on study abroad intent and assess if students are discouraging their peers from studying abroad due to their negative interactions in a host country. Future researchers can add to the body of literature around African American students' intent to study abroad.

Conclusion

Both the literature and this research study support that there are many benefits to study abroad. Those benefits range from increased academic success, more employment opportunities, and unforgettable global experiences (Milian et al., 2015). However, administrators and practitioners should understand the multifaceted and complex experiences different students are having as they venture abroad. Although 100% of those who participated in this phenomenological study recommended study abroad, one should understand that, despite the nostalgia, real instances of assault, trauma, and degradation overshadowed the majority of these experiences. This was despite a participant's socioeconomic status, age, or level of international exposure before going abroad. The racial identity of these participants drastically impacted their ability to live and learn in many countries around the world.

As educators, it is critical that we understand the need to approach students holistically, particularly African American students. Often when discussing educational opportunity for African Americans, there is an orientation around deficits as opposed to strengths. Approaching opportunity gaps around the shortcomings of African Americans and applying a deficit perspective puts the responsibility on those who are marginalized to repair a systemic issue. It is critical to place more responsibility on practitioners and educators to identify the biases, preconceptions, and assumptions brought into our educational spaces and applied to students of color. Study abroad is no different. Identifying areas of growth for study abroad practitioners and improved skillsets around cultural competence and awareness is essential to improving study abroad outcomes for underrepresented students. This is especially critical in a field where students are challenged to value difference and approach a new culture with open mindedness and a readiness to learn. It is essential that study abroad practitioners are willing to do the same.

An ability to engage diverse populations of students, prepare students and faculty to be allies and advocates, challenge institutional norms to create more inclusive practices, and become more self-aware to combat personal biases and prejudices is critical for study abroad administrators. Providing all students with quality experiences abroad benefits not only the students but also their institutions. Having students who are more globally minded, employable, and competent can result in improved student and alumni contributions and outcomes. And with a glimpse into the experiences of African Americans abroad, to continue to ignore the needs of African American students is negligent and irresponsible at best. It is our responsibility to provide all students with the information, resources, and tools needed to be successful in their educational pursuits, whether that is in the United States or abroad.

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Appendix A

Demographic Survey

Demographic Survey

Please complete all questions in the survey to the best of your ability.

By completing this survey or questionnaire, you are consenting to be in this research study. Your participation is voluntary and you can stop at any time.

* Required

First and Last Name *

Your answer

Email Address *

Your answer

Gender *

Choose



Race *

Choose



Ethnicity *

Choose ▼

Did you study abroad? *

Choose ▼

How immersive was your study abroad experience? *

1 2 3 4 5

Very immersive (Ex: Stayed with a host family/lived with locals, spoke a language other than your native language daily, etc.)

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Not Immersive (Ex: Lived with other Americans, did not speak another language/host country language, interacted primarily with Americans, etc.)

How old were you when you studied abroad? *

Your answer



In which country did you study abroad? *

Your answer

What was your classification when you studied abroad? *

Choose

What college were you attending when you studied abroad? *

Your answer

What was your college major? Minor? *

Your answer

Did you participate in a study abroad program hosted by your college/university or a partner organization? *

- ☐ My college/university
- ☐ Partner Program
- ☐ Unsure



How long was your study abroad program? *

- ☐ 1-2 weeks
- ☐ 1 month
- ☐ 1 semester
- ☐ 1 academic year
- ☐ Other:

Was your time abroad impacted by COVID-19? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

What year did you graduate from college? (Please note years for undergrad and graduate school if applicable) *

Your answer

How many years ago did you study abroad? *

Your answer



PRIOR TO YOUR STUDY ABROAD did you live abroad or travel extensively outside of the United States? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Are you a first or second-generation immigrant? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Did colorism impact your experience abroad? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Did your experience studying abroad increase your global awareness or understanding of how all people around the world are connected? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Somewhat



If you noted somewhat above please explain further

Your answer

FOLLOWING your study abroad, did you live abroad or travel extensively outside of the United States? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Did study abroad positively impact your employability or professional opportunities? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

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Appendix B

Data Collection Matrix: Summary Matrix

Research questions	Construct	Data source(s)	Data collection tool	Data analysis
What were the lived study abroad experiences of African Americans?	Experiences of study abroad	African American participants	Semi-structured interviews Items: Please describe your lived experience studying abroad as if speaking to someone unfamiliar with study abroad? What were some positive experiences you had while studying abroad?	Emergent coding and theme development
Did familial factors influence African Americans' study abroad experience?	Familial influence on study abroad	African American participants	Semi-structured interviews Items: How did the views, opinions, and thoughts of those within your family influence your study abroad experience? What messages did you hear about study abroad from family and close friends?	Emergent coding and theme development
Did social factors influence African Americans' study abroad experience?	Social influences on study abroad	African American participants	Semi-structured interviews Items: How did the views, opinions, and thoughts of those within your community or immediate social surroundings influence your study abroad experience?	Emergent coding and theme development
Did financial factors influence African Americans study abroad experience?	Financial influences on study abroad	African American participants	Semi-structured interviews Items: How did financial factors influence your study abroad experience?	Emergent coding and theme development
Did African Americans feel prepared for their study abroad experience?	Study abroad preparedness	African American participants	Semi-structured interviews Items: To what extent did you feel prepared for your study abroad experience? What if any support did you encounter when planning to study abroad? How did your college/university prepare you for your study abroad experience? What insight did you gain into the culture of your host country?	Emergent coding and theme development

Appendix C

Interview Questions

The Essence of Study Abroad:

Global Access for the African American Learner

Initial Interview Questions:

- Please describe your lived experience studying abroad as if speaking to someone unfamiliar with study abroad?
- What were some positive experiences you had while studying abroad?
- How did the views, opinions, and thoughts of those within your family influence your study abroad experience?
- What messages did you hear about study abroad from family and close friends?
- How did the views, opinions, and thoughts of those within your community or immediate social surroundings influence your study abroad experience?
- How did financial factors influence your study abroad experience?
- To what extent did you feel prepared for your study abroad experience?
- What if any support did you encounter when planning to study abroad?
 - Institutional
 - Interpersonal (family & friends)
 - Personal
- How did your college/university prepare you for your study abroad experience?
- What insight did you gain into the culture of your host country?
- How did your host culture influence how you now view the world?
- How did you bring your experience abroad back home with you?
- How important was this study abroad experience for you?

- What were some things you struggled to understand while studying abroad?
- What/if any barriers did you encounter when planning to study abroad?
 - Institutional
 - Interpersonal (family & friends)
 - Personal
- To what extent did study abroad influence your employability?
- How were you accepted as a Black person in your host country?
- Were there any things you wish you knew as a Black person prior to your study abroad?
- In light of the current pandemic, what are your thoughts about study abroad?
- Please provide clarity/elaborate on (Specific Topic) you previously discussed?

Appendix D

Study Abroad Recommendations

Administrators/Practitioners	All Students	Quotes
Having one point of contact assigned to particular students who they can reach out to for all questions and build trust and rapport with	Do your personal research on the country where you are studying	Making sure there's one key person that you can go to for all your questions. That was very important. We could just go to (the professor). She was very familiar with the process like we had to even apply to be able to go to the country, so I couldn't imagine having to do that by myself. I've never done anything like that before. So it was really helpful to have that key person.
Help students prepared for the culture they are going to be immersed in so they: 1) Can integrate into culture, 2) Can remain safe while abroad, 3) Know who they are going to be living with (other students and host families)	Know the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The political climate • The culture • The historical context • The language • How you identify & • How people with that identity are treated in your host country where you are studying 	<p>Making sure that they have us prepared for the culture so we're not sticking out like a sore thumb. (The professor) had us set. I didn't feel uncomfortable in any situation because I didn't know what was going on as far as like the culture.</p> <p>I think it is also a good thing to know just like if you're going to another country just knowing what the political climate looks like knowing just general things is very helpful. Research the country that you're going to, I think that was really big.</p> <p>Be aware of the timing. And what the current events are in the place you want to go to.</p>
Increase visibility of study abroad on campus	Review all resources. If studying abroad with a partner program, review all partner program resources	Having a study abroad fair, was like really helpful
Connect students who have studied abroad to students planning to study abroad in the same host country- Particularly for students of color	Connect to students who have studied abroad in the same host country	Do your research- I think is a really big thing that I learned. There isn't that much out there but I know one of the biggest things for me was talking to people who had already studied abroad where I had gone.
Teach students to humbly engage with the new culture they are immersed in and be prepared to learn from the culture	Travel outside of your host country	<p>I definitely encourage them to travel outside of the city that they're studying in because, especially Europe, everything's like a state away so it's a completely different culture, even if you go two hours from where you were.</p> <p>My overall recommendation to students and to administrators would be that everybody who participates be encouraged to not socialize exclusively with people in the program.</p> <p>There's this thing of thinking because you're American you know better. And I just think that people should</p>

Administrators/Practitioners	All Students	Quotes
		<p>understand that when they're going abroad, they're going as a student. So you can celebrate the similarities, but be humble enough to learn something different.</p> <p>somewhere along the line needs to come some appreciation of the culture you're going into</p>
Help students align their future goals with their experience abroad BEFORE they go abroad	Determine how this experience abroad can align with your future goals BEFORE you go abroad	<p>I would implore students to ask themselves, "How do you foresee this helping you in the future? And if it doesn't go the way you planned, what are the implications of that?" I knew going abroad would be a great experience but I had no idea what that meant. On the other side does this mean I am more employable? Does this mean people are going to like me more? Am I going to be more intriguing? What are the implications of this abroad experience?</p> <p>What do you intend to do with your experience once you get back right, is there any sort of application and knowledge that you see yourself using once you get back</p>
Develop/Utilize study abroad ambassadors and students who have studied abroad who are willing to give back		<p>A formal global ambassadors or stay abroad Ambassadors Program, making sure you're tapping them to be advocates. really utilizing the people that want to give back and really talk about these experiences like utilizing them they're there and they have such good experience valuable experience, especially when there isn't a very strong Study Abroad Office.</p>
Invest in your study abroad offices/ develop a study abroad office		<p>Put in a little money and put in a little human resources and being able to have something some sort of infrastructure at the office to really support students. I think that would just be helpful</p>
Understand your Identity, preconceptions, and biases you bring to study abroad and the work you do in study abroad		<p>If I have any suggestions it is, do your own work, especially those who don't come from the same identity that those of us that are BIPOC people, Black and African American, which in our culture we oftentimes had to do this work for multiple reasons.</p> <p>Do your own identity work, understand where your biases come from and where your cultural nuances come from and that we're not in binary. How does that affect the work that you do? How does that affect your interaction with</p>

Administrators/Practitioners	All Students	Quotes
		<p>students? How does that affect how you advise students? How does that affect the programming that you do for students, especially when you're working with Black and African American students? Are you carrying these biases of why students don't study abroad, or why African American or Black and Brown students don't study abroad? And are you generalizing and stereotyping?</p> <p>You doing that identity work will help you to not do that, because you will see where you need to grow so that you don't inflict those things on to Black and Brown students. Those unconscious biases, those stereotypes that you're using.</p> <p>There are 180 some odd countries in the world, like you don't need to go somewhere just because your friend went there.</p> <p>Keep and continue to do pre-departure meetings with students that are preparing to study abroad, even if it's just one. And I think that they should do that with somebody that has studied abroad. It's really great to get the secondhand experiences from coordinators or advisors, but sometimes students will give more advice or things that students are more interested in or that may be more relevant to their thinking at the time in terms of how they're navigating their time, their activities, and experiences.</p> <p>I think that talking about scholarships, in more depth and how students can use regular scholarships to study abroad, because I think the focus is often just on the study abroad scholarships with those programs. So especially with the student loan crisis and things of that nature just communicating to students about finances of paying for the program.</p> <p>Also, realistically, the type of money that they might spend so maybe have, like, people actually record their budgets and share with students, not just say, oh, you'll probably spend about this a day</p> <p>I remember watching like our peers suffer for failure to learn the language. And because they had just been kind of thrust into this experience. And so to me preparation for study abroad is not</p>
Vary your study abroad program offerings- different countries		
Make sure students participate in PRE-Departure orientations, discuss culture, and incorporate other students who have gone abroad		
Discuss study abroad scholarship options with students, including short term program scholarships		
Have students record their actual budgets and spending while abroad		
Equip students with the needed language skills- Ex: Students should not be studying in Paris without basic French language skills (Few people will		

Administrators/Practitioners	All Students	Quotes
<p>speak to you in Paris without knowing French)</p> <p>Implore students to respect the students who are not in country to party</p> <p>Be willing to collaborate across institutions</p>		<p>only the study is you have to first study the language and that has to be something that is built around years of years of classroom experiences.</p> <p>Let's say you know, 90% of it (your time abroad) is just cultural and wanting to get out, fine, be clear about that and also respect like, where your, your other cohort members are in where their degree of seriousness is.</p> <p>I would say check your own attitudes about shaming someone who's there to like, to be studious. And not to not to just hang out.</p> <p>Don't be afraid to reach out to colleagues at similar institutions. I didn't realize until I got into the field that there are state associations.</p>

Appendix E

Study Abroad Recommendations for African American Students

Administrators/Practitioners	African American Students	Quotes
Help students understand country context & history of people of color	<p>Know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The political climate • The culture • The historical context • The language • How you identify & • How people with that identity are treated in your host country where you are studying • The history of people of color in the country where you are studying 	<p>Do the due diligence of doing your research, like don't wait for the information to happenstance come across you but make sure you're reaching out for that information.</p> <p>I would say to do your research, not just from like what a professor may tell you, but to just have a little bit of background information about where you're going.</p> <p>Do your research. Look up their culture.</p> <p>For Black students, I think it will be helpful to know the history of Black people in the country where they're studying. I think honestly that's the biggest thing. That's one reason that we went and studied on the coast where there were more Black Mexicans. (The) professors selected the location that where there were more Mexicans of color.</p>
Connect students to other students of color/ African American students who have studied abroad in the same host country	Speak to other students of color about their experience in your host country before going abroad	<p>Other students to sit down with a Black student who had previously studied abroad, maybe just ask them questions about their experience concerns that they had. I think that would be helpful I know that when I was considering.</p> <p>They gave me three options for people and I was able to choose the one that I wanted and I chose the Black student, and we were able to talk specifically about that experience. What it's like. And, and that kind of help ultimately helped to shape my decision so I think that that can be helpful as well.</p> <p>Seeing if any Black students who have previously studied abroad to those different to the countries that they, they partner with seeing if they would be willing to be references for a student for Black students who are planning on traveling abroad to those places. Talking to an admin who's White and you're Black, they're not going to be able to talk to you about the experience that you're going to have; and I feel like it would be beneficial for you to talk to somebody who's of the same age and who has also potentially experienced</p>

Administrators/Practitioners	African American Students	Quotes
		<p>those same experiences that you might experience when you go there.</p> <p>Not knowing anyone personally like I think, (who studied abroad). And in the field of study abroad now, I realized how much word of mouth is influential in students studying abroad. There wasn't anyone in my immediate circles that had studied abroad. So I had to seek out those people. Just a lot of inquiring, asking the Study Abroad Office like "hey, are there people on campus who have studied abroad" and getting that information. So definitely not a lot of peers that were able to talk to you about study abroad.</p> <p>Just like the mentorship and guidance wasn't really there.</p>
Help students develop systems of support & Increase visibility	Identify your support networks you will need while abroad.	<p>First and foremost, put Black kids in the brochures, put someone who's Black in your study abroad office, send out memos. Have people reach out to these students in these communities. Have them have a meeting. Have a Black student lead a meeting where it's like, "all right, I know you all are scared or worried about the financial pieces" or "your families aren't supportive", "here's what my experience was like". Have them reach out to these students</p> <p>There should be a program like an ambassador program where it's like, "okay, these people went to Spain. These people came back from Spain in this program. And you're gonna stay with them for a week, or something like that. And they're gonna tell you how their experience was". Something like that. There has to be some sort of program like that, especially for Black people.</p> <p>Visibility of study abroad. I mean, every now and then some providers would come to the Student Center, and they would just have booths. But it was just kind of like you had to know to stop there and you had to know what they were in order to even learn about study abroad. It wasn't like there was any announcement sent out that was like "hey this study abroad provider is going to be here make sure you stop by".</p>

Administrators/Practitioners	African American Students	Quotes
		<p>I remember having to hunt down the Study Abroad Office. I don't know how I found it. And just even location, just finding the Study Abroad Office, and knowing about it on campus was I think a barrier.</p> <p>I would say something I might have done differently, I might make this a requirement for me, or at least my university- have me find the professor or administrator that I had with whom I had the closest relationship and make a pledge to be in touch with that person. Like every two weeks throughout that time. Like we should touch base when I get there, we should touch base on the third day, we should touch base at the end of the first week. And then like every two weeks after that. Because there's a culture shock. And if you're not around best friends, there can be sort of a loneliness that sets in before you really get to know people, and your host family. And it's helpful to have a touchstone that can be on the other side and hear you if you need to sort of document something that happens. Whether it's good or bad. I definitely think people should have someone on call and particularly for Black students who will probably be the minority in the group. We should have somebody on call to check in with him.</p>
Invest in study abroad offices and staff	Understand that at many HBCUs study abroad is not the study abroad administrator/professors only responsibility. It may be necessary to build in additional supports or time to get what you need to go abroad.	<p>I think a lot of people HBCUs that get into the study abroad office that's not necessarily their sole job their academics in addition or their, you know, they have multiple hats as administrators and so really making sure they're getting the resources that they need within the study abroad community, I think, is really helpful.</p> <p>Even the hurdles of things not being streamlined could pose a challenge – having to go to many offices on campus to get all academic pieces taken care of.</p>
Prepare students for the in-country financial obligations before going abroad	Try to determine actual spending of other students abroad in your host country & Save as much as you can before going abroad	<p>I would say like the financial like the having that financial stage, and just having money for you. You may want to buy something from a shop or you may want to do something when you get out there. You may not ever come back to this place and if you have that opportunity if you do go there.</p> <p>For Black kids that the issue is what it is as it relates to all of education is resources. And resources both on the</p>

Administrators/Practitioners	African American Students	Quotes
		<p>ground and resources before they touched down and resources that persist throughout the experience.</p> <p>When Black students get up there with no money the experience is completely different. Traveling the bus every single day, it's just everything becomes exacerbated because they're alone. They don't really have any friends. Money transferring takes a while, credit cards shut down at any given moment because you're making too many charges abroad. Debit and checking cards shut down. So it's like these are all really real realities that of course disproportionately impact those who don't have the resources.</p> <p>How much money is he getting a day or if he's on scholarship, does that scholarship encompass daily eating? Stuff like that.</p> <p>If you can save up some money so that you can travel around to different cities do it. Absolutely travel while you're in the country and travel safely but travel with a buddy or two to learn it together. Especially somebody to have when something gets hairy, or just to have somebody that can witness your experience with you. So you can either get some validation in that and some protection in that or just to digest and enrich in your experience.</p>
Guide students through how to receive academic credit	Make sure you can receive academic credit while abroad	<p>From a career standpoint I think that students should understand before leaving how many credits it may take to turn their experience into a minor, so that they can plan for that in their curriculum, either before leaving or upon returning.</p> <p>I actually submitted all the paperwork before I left, and none of it was finalized until after I came back; and I had to sit down with my advisor and do an interview and go through the whole process and explain why I felt I deserved credit. So that was the biggest barrier.</p> <p>There were some students that even though they came with our program they stayed for longer and they don't really have those issues upfront of</p>

Administrators/Practitioners	African American Students	Quotes
		<p>getting that academic credit so before we left, they knew they were going to be fine. Otherwise I would have had to take an extra course which would have mean at that point I would have has to take it in the summer or another semester</p> <p>The biggest thing was making sure that I could take the core courses that I needed for my major.</p> <p>That was that was a concern at some point. Whether or not Whether or not my credits we're gonna count.</p> <p>Making sure you know the credits transferred in and that the school that I was going to was accredited overseas or at least the program was.</p>
Get a sense of students' needs and fears before they travel abroad	Understand your identity and fears before traveling abroad	<p>Making sure that we know the safe areas for Black people specifically because, I think Black people know as a whole that there's certain areas, even in the United States, that you don't go. There's a certain places that you don't stay, when it gets dark because you're gonna seriously be risking your health and your life. So I think that's really important. And teaching us how to deal with anything that might come along, because we do have an extra target on our back.</p> <p>Providing some kind of discourse, with those students to talk about what are the concerns. Do you feel that it's going to be different. What other experiences have you heard from other Black students that you know have studied abroad in in similar areas, different areas.</p> <p>Ask them what they need. What do you need to get you from here to there? What are you afraid of? What would prohibit you from going? Where can we help you reach your goal?</p>
Teach students what their experience could be as an African American student	Find whatever resources you can prior to going abroad on the African American experience in your country of study	<p>Learn about the other culture, but also learn about your yourself so that you can understand how, like yourself and the other culture. Right, so that when you go there you can you can learn how you need to show up in that space.</p> <p>Racism is rampant not just here, but it's definitely felt more strongly in some</p>

Administrators/Practitioners	African American Students	Quotes
		<p>countries than it is in others, and talk to those students about that. Ask “would you feel more comfortable in a place where you're going to see more people who look like you?”</p> <p>If it's a partner program that you're going with, taking the time to kind of go through their website and see if they have any student blogs that you can read or any student videos, um, that you could read as well.</p> <p>You can't just expect a Black student to go off to a very racist country without any types of support systems.</p> <p>Make sure they do their research on what it's like to be Black in whatever country that they plan on studying abroad in or traveling to while they're studying abroad so they can at least get an understanding of the generic sentiments of that country or culture so that they're not shocked.</p> <p>If I had had more knowledge of the Spanish culture and what I would experience one of two things would have happened: I either would not have gone, or I would have been more prepared for ,I would have set up my support network differently. Like Okay guys, let's get all of our parents to agree to send the five of us over there, which is what White people do. Like, all those people were over there with their buddies. They had at least one buddy in the program. You know so, something like that.</p> <p>For Black students, I would say make sure that you have the support network setup that you think you may need, in case of an emergency. So, who knows you the best. Not who's your closest friends, or who's your best friend in college. But who knows you the best? Is that mom, dad, grandma, auntie, whatever? Make sure that they're there for you understand the time difference. And make sure that you have enough pocket money to get around. And also make sure you have an emergency plan.</p> <p>The way that you're going to have to watch for your safety is going to be a little different from your non-Black, or your peers that are not of color because White supremacy is global. The way that the world treats White people is</p>

Administrators/Practitioners	African American Students	Quotes
		just different than the way the world treats Black people. If I can get pulled over here for no reason I can get pulled over in another country for no reason- and I did. I was put against the wall and patted down and all that, that doesn't mean the entire country is bad. What it means is that some of the things that are here that are inherent to White supremacy are in other places and so you're gonna have to be extra careful.
Develop measures that compel students to speak the language they came to study	<p>Speak the language of the country you are in</p> <p>& Be ok if you take this more seriously than other American students you are studying with</p>	<p>When you're out and about, speak in the language that you came to speak even when you're with your friends. Especially when you're in public, especially when you're in mixed company. I think it looks good on you, the group, the program, your university you represent.</p> <p>To speak the language that you came to speak, go there with some intention of practicing it and do it. That's the best thing that you can do for yourself no matter who's going. But that part is particularly notable for Black people who seem to have to always stretch above and beyond, you know, in order to be considered equal.</p> <p>I've heard and seen where students of marginalized go into study abroad a little bit different than maybe the White, identified dominant culture sometimes. Where it's like that Mexican woman told me, I appreciate you because you come here to learn. Where, because we've always had to be cognizant of our culture and the other cultures that are around us. And so that doesn't stop when you go to another country.</p>
Help students align their future goals with their experience abroad BEFORE they go abroad	<p>Determine how this experience abroad can align with your future goals BEFORE you go abroad</p> <p>See if you can arrange an internship while you are abroad</p>	<p>Really take this opportunity to arm yourself with another skill seriously. Because it looks different. It looks cool on one person's resume, and they'll get a check mark in the entry just for that. And you (Black person) may or may not have that someone may want to know, "what did you do?" Like What Did you come back with, and have that to come back with.</p> <p>Kind of illuminating the types of careers that can come from international travel. Some students come with their minds made up, but</p>

Administrators/Practitioners	African American Students	Quotes
		there are a lot of opportunities. And I think that what's not touched on while students are already abroad is how to find jobs abroad. And it makes a lot of sense to do that while you're already over there. In terms of finding internships or what have you. So I think the focus is oftentimes on study and learning language and getting the experience; but there's a whole ecosystem. So, if I had thought more clearly I might have tried to apply for internships while I was abroad and interviewed, while I was there.
Understand the role family plays in making the decision to study abroad	Be prepared to communicate the benefits and safety measures of study abroad with your family or community	Research can be done further is you know the impact of the family dynamics on students studying abroad. I think they play a huge role and it's something that isn't tapped into as much.
Help students inform their families about study abroad		There's still so much to be said of if a student is going to college was still working to take care of their families, their younger siblings or, or, you know, if the parents are saying you know we don't want you to go into the country if they're if they are footing the bill for part of your education, you're kind of still at their mercy and so, you know, having those open conversations with parents, I think is really helpful.
Develop groups for students who return so they have a place to unpack their experiences.	Understand that Anti-Blackness is global	The fact that anti blackness is global, it can be kind of tricky. So I was very fortunate in Mexico; but I intentionally did not want to stay in a host family, not knowing what I was going to experience as a result of anti-blackness.
Provide students with specifics/logistics of their program abroad (host family information, roommates from other institutions, etc.)		Anti-blackness is global. Depending on where you are, even if you're in Cuba, if you're in Panama, where there are more Black people, it's still there. So I would just make people aware of that and just talk about the common shared struggle. Because there is a shared struggle, and there is a shared celebration.
		As I come back to (my college) or come back to the States, who am I to talk to that can relate? And there are other students who have gone abroad, Black students who have gone abroad? But where are they? Where are these alumni chapters, so to speak?
	Be prepared to connect more to locals than you study abroad cohort (if your cohort is predominantly White) in host	My experience was that you were going to identify more with the native people than you are with the White students in

Administrators/Practitioners	African American Students	Quotes
	country if traveling where there is a population of color Do your personal research on the country where you are studying	your program. So don't be afraid of that, understand that, and leverage that.

Appendix F

Experiences around Race and Ethnicity Abroad

Subthemes	Interactions around Race
<i>Race and the host country</i>	<p>I remember I got called <i>moreno</i> or <i>negrita</i>. which in orientation they mentioned to us that those are standard language for what they call someone that's a darker skin, but not anything that is said with malicious or ill intent.</p> <p>Everywhere we went all of the local people would be like, you should go to Limon. You would fit, they would fit so well there you should go to Limon. So luckily there were four other Black students. I knew, and we had discussed that we're going. It was kind of like they were saying the same thing to all of us, except for one girl who was very, very fair.</p> <p>So we went there and we were like oh there are Black people. Now see why everyone keeps trying to push us to come here because this is the only place with Black people.</p> <p>When I walked up the (Costa Rican) woman, she assumed that I didn't speak Spanish, so she was saying how she didn't want me to buy from her because I didn't have money. Then the other girl asked her why and she was like, "because she's Black I know she doesn't have the money".</p> <p>Me and my friends, we actually took a walk around Tiberius, just to look around. Just to see what it's like. One person, while we were walking, they were like, "you need to go back to America we don't like you here".</p> <p>There was a pool at the hotel and there were a lot of Caucasian people in the pool. But as soon as we got in the pool because a lot of us are African American, like everybody that was at the pool got up and got out of the pool and left. So I felt like that was different because, as I could say again, a lot of people don't just get out the pool just because of how you look. So I feel like that was really different and I really thought about that the whole day because both of those things happened in the same day and it's just like wow. People really grew up like this. It's what they were probably taught. This is learned behavior so if they're learning it, sisters, brothers, they learned it too. I just felt like, it was just horrible.</p> <p>I did feel like I wasn't accepted when I got there just because of what I look like. We went to like a historical museum and we had a tour guide that actually worked at the museum. I know a lot of my professors didn't feel it because they are Caucasian so they weren't catching what the tour guy would say. All of us was African American and it was kind of like, to me, to everybody, to all of us, it was racist. It was very racist. But the professors, they didn't say anything about it. And I felt maybe because they didn't get it. But it was so racist and literally all of us felt the racism, every time the tour guide would speak. I just felt like that was another thing that kind of threw me off as well. I feel like the whole trip is kind of very racist. But I learned from it.</p> <p>When I was in the Jordan River there were some Israeli people there. And, I had really long box braids in my hair and they're like touching you, saying "oh my gosh this is nice. What is this?" And I felt like, wow, we have some people that are nice around here... So it really helped...And a lot of people were shocked to see us. They were calling us brown sugar. So a lot of people were actually really friendly it's just some people that weren't.</p> <p>We met with the Ethiopian Jews who had darker skin tones just like us. And they were very nice. They were very welcoming. And I just felt like the atmosphere with them was very different than how I felt with a lot of the other, more of the Orthodox Jews. They (Ethiopian jews) were more open, they spoke more to you. And all the kids were just so happy and nice; ready to come up to you and talk to you. It was just so welcoming</p> <p>I didn't really realize that racism existed the way that we experience it here in other places.</p> <p>And so there were probably 18 of us total, and I'm the only Black person, there was (a young lady) who was Puerto Rican everybody else was White, and I was maybe 14th in line. I was definitely towards the very end, but I know there was at least one guy behind me, and all the students they showed their ID, flash their ID, the guard just let them in. The guard was as dark as I (was) but he was Mexican right, he wasn't Black, he was just a brown skinned Mexican. And they (White students) flashed their ID. Go on, didn't have a discussion with him- nothing. All of these 14 people went ahead of me then it's my turn. I</p>

Subthemes	Interactions around Race
	<p>showed my student ID, and I'm clearly with this group, I showed my ID, and he wouldn't let me in. He's just like, "oh no, I don't think this is real" and like going back and forth with me and telling me that I couldn't be a student. I'm not a student, there's no way that I'm a student with this group. And my friend who was the Puerto Rican girl was behind me in line and she's looking like are you kidding. And then the program guide came because everyone else had already gone ahead and she came back, like starts yelling at him like what's the problem she's obviously with this group.; he eventually let me in. And this (White) guy who was studying with us, he was behind me. And he got through and he came up to me and he's like "Wow, that was strange Huh?". Like, yeah, that's one way to put it. It was very strange. I understood it, having come from a place where racist things happen all the time here. So I understood it; but it was really hard to wrap my mind around how people who were as dark or darker than me, were treating me badly because I wasn't White. That was really, really hard to come to terms with and understand.</p> <p>It's like one of the things you're walking down the street, and people want you to clean their house and watch their kids. And you're like, "I'm a student", and they're like, "Yeah, I don't care. But can you clean my house?"</p> <p>And then a really nice person, we lived in a dorm, he was really nice. And he was very welcoming. He actually went out of his way to be welcoming. And we were all, me and the other Spaniard students who lived in the dorm, we were in the common room watching football. And the ref was Black. And this same person who had been so kind to me since I went there, he didn't like the call that the ref made and he basically said, "effing nigger" like in Spanish, right? But he basically said the equivalent of that, and then like, the whole room was like, because they know I speak Spanish. No one's expecting that to come out. Like just, especially from him. He seemed so nice, and he later apologized. But that just made me like, realize. No matter what language they speak, where they from, this deep seated Anti-Blackness, can come out from the crevices of their soul. And anytime, at any time, no matter how nice they treat you, no matter. Because as people are noting, kindness is not the opposite of being antiracist. Just because you're kind doesn't mean you're not racist.</p> <p>My parents came to visit me in Spain, and this time we were in Madrid. And there was a guy who was begging for money. And my dad, basically, I forgot why he said no, but it was like a weird. I don't know if we were in the middle of the street, it was something awkward. And he basically called him a nigger in Madrid. So my dad was like, "I had to fly all the way over here to get called that." He was like "I could have of stayed home for this". So in Spain I experienced the most direct forms of racism.</p> <p>I love theater. So there's a show. My Fair Lady, was playing at one of the theaters, it must have been Madrid. I go to my hotel, and I get dressed up. I have like this, like, nice sweater dress thing. So the taxi driver picked me up. He basically was like, "I didn't know they let prostitutes go into this hotel".</p> <p>My house lady was a White Spanish woman, and we had a racial discussion. That was the first time I realized that there is this perception about people of color in Madrid.</p> <p>I definitely got into a huge argument on race at in my home because my "house mother" was using the word nigger to me. I remember, I think it was like, I don't know you get that moment where the light bulb goes off and you understand how to speak Spanish. It was because I was telling her off in Spanish for the first time about how racist she was being, and how inappropriate, and I wasn't going to tolerate it.</p> <p>Studying in Madrid, I really realized that no matter where I go I'm going to be a Black man. Maybe some of it (racism) was being African and I'm American, but I have African features. And so I would be called all sorts of names. Developing as a man, it was like I was developing these insecurities about who I was and I had nowhere to really seek comfort.</p> <p>Because he was a Black man, people always offered him drugs. I noticed that in Mexico. But as it relates to what I witnessed it was more so Black men being targeted for ridiculous illegal things.</p>
<i>Racist</i>	Some other students from other institutions were racist and would say comments. And there was one point the students from the other school were teaching the host family some racial things. Like racist things like in America Black people are like this, and in America Black people are like this.
<i>Interactions with</i>	
<i>Americans</i>	
<i>Abroad</i>	
	I didn't have any issues. The racism that I encountered was from teachers from my school.

Subthemes	Interactions around Race
<i>Colorism</i>	<p>The lighter (skinned Black) students actually, people just thought they were Costa Ricans. So they would just come up and you start speaking Spanish.</p> <p>The lighter girl got cat called. But anywhere we went we could all be together in the same outfit and they would still be hollering at her.</p> <p>As a light-skinned African American woman, the type of looks that a lot of my darker skinned friends, like they're darker skinned than me. And so they got looks whenever they went places and I never really experienced that. And I'm assuming I'm just lighter. And so it was something, the fact that my skin complexion was a lot lighter than theirs like I didn't really experience the same Black experience that they had.</p> <p>It's a very colorist society. So, all of the students of the university were White Mexicans, all of them. All of the professors at the university were White Mexicans every single one of them. And then anyone in a support role in that university whether you were a janitor or you were a kitchen staff or a groundskeeper, they were all brown skinned Mexicans.</p> <p>I remember distinctly going to a club with a group of people in the cohort. I distinctly remember this... Nope, he can't come in. And I'll never forget that day. It was like, there is something distinct about me and that was that part was hard to I was like, I said, there's something this is there's something distinct about me. That's like, not likable and not acceptable. You know, um. That part that really messed with my head. You know, even between me and another person in the diaspora there was so yeah, so there was definitely colorism.</p>
<i>Areas of Color</i>	I was expecting to see more melanin and more brown skin and I didn't see that until I went to the coast of Puerto Viejo, in the province of Limon. That's where you find Afro Latinos and the afro-Costa Ricans. I definitely felt more at home. (There were) people that I could seemingly relate to. I mean granted, they spoke Spanish and they live in Costa Rica so they have their own different cultures and customs but we had that shared identity, which I think brought us together. There was just a little bit more of a sense of community.
<i>Abroad</i>	

Appendix G

Community (Family and Social) Influence

Subthemes	Communication with Community
<i>Anti-Africa</i>	<p>I would tell other people I was going to West Africa and they'd be like, "Oh, you're gonna be in huts", or "you're not gonna be wearing shoes", or "you're gonna see zebras." I was like You sound so stupid, because no I'm not doing that. I would get so frustrated.</p> <p>It's not that I went there (Africa), believing that I always, I think I always believed in my heart that there was more (than how it is portrayed in the US), and I was fortunate to have an upbringing of people that had also traveled on seeing other parts of the world, and just Um were aware of that element of propaganda to educate me otherwise.</p>
Combination of Support and Fear Around Study Abroad	<p>I told my mom that I wanted to study abroad, she was all for it but her being a single mom she was definitely concerned about like, is it going to be safe where am I going?</p> <p>I don't remember what some of my first choices were but my mom was like, do we know anyone that has traveled there like? She was a little nervous, so she played a large role. So yes, she was definitely nervous through the whole process but when she talked to some other classmates that had been and she did our own research intensively, she was a little bit more at ease and knowing the safety and security protocols that AIFS had in place.</p> <p>They were supportive. My mother was the main one that I would go to about it. Then when I ended up going, she started telling family and friends and they were excited for me as well. They were also just scared because once again, I was going thousands of miles away. And my mom very used to being pretty close, at least driving distance. And it was kind of difficult for her just because she wasn't going to be able to fly to me.</p> <p>I think it was like a mixture. I think they were more so excited. I know my mom was, just because she'd never really got to travel. At least she never got to study abroad so it was something that she was really happy that I can do.</p> <p>Traveling abroad and kind of just experiencing life outside of the United States is something that my mother is very keen on me doing, just in the safest way that I possibly can.</p> <p>My family was very supportive. They were a little nervous as I think all parents would be with me going so far away. And for a prolonged period of time.</p> <p>Obviously my parents, my mom in particular, were a little bit nervous about studying abroad. This is in 2002, so this was after the craziness of 9-11. Traveling had definitely changed at that time. But overall everyone was looking forward to it and excited for me to go.</p> <p>I mean I had like family members like. "why do you have to go so far" but I was blessed. I didn't really have any opposition to go into study abroad from my family and friends.</p>
<i>Community Support</i>	<p>My mom was very adamant about making sure that I was able to get to go. She didn't care what she was going to have to do, she was going to make sure I was going to be able to go because she thinks it's very important to do stuff like that.</p>
<i>Fear of Study Abroad</i>	<p>People were very supportive. A lot of people were kind of proud because like, small town girl goes to, you know, wherever.</p> <p>When I said I wanted to go they (parents) were terrified of course. terrified to the point where for the first week, they actually came with me, they flew over. And they were present on the first half of the first day. They came with us just to get a feel and then they explored there just to make sure they felt comfortable with it. But they were not super excited.</p> <p>The least supportive member of my family was my grandmother. She's very protective and if you can imagine, back in her day, these types of opportunities just were unfathomable.</p>

Subthemes	Communication with Community
	<p>My parents had a big concern about traveling to Israel at such a time in, because so many things were going on there. When I first told them about it they were like, “uh, you're not going to Israel”.</p> <p>So, my parents are older. I'm the baby of nine. So she was very apprehensive about it because my mother is not she not a flight person. You know, she's 79 has never flown. So she was already apprehensive about that.</p> <p>So it was not something that she was proud about, or not necessarily not proud, but just very nervous and anxious about me going out of the country and going by myself.</p> <p>That's what they (friends) say. They're like “they don't like Black people over there”</p> <p>My best friend, when she had a study abroad, her parents were glad I was going because they knew I had already done it.</p>

Appendix H

Financial Influences of Study Abroad

Subthemes	Participant Quotes
Pre-Departure Expenses	<p>Someone must have told me that my financial aid would cover the cost of the program. I don't know if I came to that conclusion on my own or who might have told me that. But I do know as I was getting all my documents together I had to make sure I went to the business office and submit a form letting them know that I was going to be studying abroad and that they needed to apply my financial aid to the program. So I remember having to do a lot of paper work around that. I think I just was like, it's part of my educational experience my financial aid is going to cover it. It's going to be no problem at all.</p> <p>I was fortunate enough, like most of my financial aid at Hampton was federal loans so those could cover it but there's some people that have like private loans where they wouldn't cover study abroad.</p> <p>I applied for the study abroad scholarships, but because I wasn't staying for the full semester it was more difficult. There's lots of qualifications that you have to have to get the (study abroad) scholarship. Because I was only going for like the month and a half, it was basically the mini semester, I couldn't use them, the majority of the scholarships.</p> <p>I want to say that in terms of financing the experience, my tuition payments pretty much went towards the abroad experience. So that made it relatively simple, at least for the semester trip.</p> <p>There were different efforts or opportunities to study abroad in different countries. Also, you could study abroad for a semester, or a year or the summer. Because I wanted to have that study abroad experience, but also didn't have an abundance of cash available to me to participate, I decided to go with a Summer Study. And one of the programs that was less costly.</p> <p>That program was expensive man. It was as much if not more than tuition at (my college). And then I had to still figure out a bunch of things financially. So the financial thing, I think was the biggest burden. Because even my peers that had families that were doing well were like, "Man, that's, that's too expensive. That doesn't make sense. Is that really going to benefit me?" So, the Financial piece.</p>
In-Country Expenses	<p>But one thing that I did not. I was not made aware of his like how much you should have personally say when you go abroad. That's where I think I got myself in trouble because I was like the tuition, room and board is paid for. I'm good.</p> <p>I mean, definitely could have prepared better for money management while abroad. Because there were times when I was definitely calling home like, so I need your help. And I worked that full summer. I think I probably had two jobs the summer prior, one being an actual internship. But you plan for the currency, the conversion rate. You think about what you're going to spend, but one college students aren't, on average, the most responsible. And me I definitely was not super keen to financial management. So, planning for the different shopping experiences or tours that you wanted to do you know those things added up. And it was like, everything was like "this is a once in a lifetime experience, so if I don't do it now I'm not gonna do it ever".</p> <p>I was somewhat prepared. And I had a backup plan but definitely could have had a more realistic view about how much money I would spend outside of just tuition. And in light, you know, excursions and shopping experiences.</p> <p>My money went a lot further than I initially thought it was going to but I thought it was going to go far anyway because, like, the euro was really strong.</p> <p>My parents were like okay we're gonna pay for your education, but you figure out the rest. So, I worked, and I saved up my little bit of money. I think I went to Spain with like \$2,000, which, if I was living on campus in America that's a good amount of money to get me through a semester, maybe even a year. But abroad, alone, that's nothing right. So, I went over there with this false sense of actually what I had in my pocket. So, I was essentially living poor, I was poor.</p>

Subthemes	Participant Quotes
Family Financial Support	<p>I was blessed in that my parents kind of threw pretty much all of their resources behind my brother and I and our educational pursuits. So, you know, coming back with an idea of anything educational was fully accepted and, you know, by the grace of God we had the resources to do that.</p> <p>I personally didn't have the funds. But again, my family stepped in and made sure that that was able to happen</p> <p>Someone told me, "hey lunch is on your own". So, lunch on my own for like 16-17 weeks, was not something I financially prepared for. So that was a conversation I had to have with my mom. At the time and I think again because my mom did so much research she made sure I was equipped with a AAA Visa Debit Card. So it essentially was a prepaid card where she would load money to it from the US, and I could just go to any ATM and withdraw money.</p> <p>My mother had to pay the tuition for the program that I was applying to upfront, but then (the college) reimbursed me for what the semester cost would have been for me in terms of financial aid if I was on campus.</p> <p>My parents, they actually gave me money. And it wasn't just my parents, like my aunts and uncles, they ended up giving me some money. And then, as I said, I did have a job. So I've always had like my own. So I kind of used my own and their money.</p> <p>I don't remember if I needed additional money while I was there, but I know that definitely beforehand they (family) made sure I had money in my account that I could access if needed.</p> <p>And while I was there, I didn't experience any financial troubles, my family was great, in terms of providing the resources that I need to both get to Mexico and be able to enjoy my time.</p> <p>I personally didn't have the funds. My family stepped in and made sure that was able to happen</p> <p>I think the program was absurdly expensive for the amount of time we went, I remember that. But it included homestay, like two meals a day, our flights, I think it was like \$3000. But I think that I got financial assistance from the university for that program. And my mom worked three jobs the whole time I was in college. So she did all of those jobs to put me through college and I made her pay for me to go to Mexico too. Ungrateful little (laughing)... but my dad also helped to pay for that trip.</p> <p>I definitely come from privilege. My tuition, my parents paid for my tuition, and they could afford any kind of fees associated with my traveling abroad, especially if it wasn't within the same price as my college tuition and anything extra that related to my being abroad. So I was very privileged in that way.</p>
No/Limited Financial Assistance	<p>Because there was a part of me that knew that my parents weren't completely elated about it (study abroad) I wanted to find a way to fund it myself. So, I worked a good number of hours, pretty much working every day. I had class but I was working and then I also had a scholarship that was able to fund the rest of it.</p> <p>When it first started everybody was like, 'well, I'm not helping pay for it because I don't want you to go'. So, at the time I was working. So, we had payment plans where we had to pay probably like \$500 a month. So, I worked so I ended up like paying my part, then refund checks hit the accounts. So I used a little bit of my refund money to help me go on this trip.</p> <p>I did as much as I could to get like scholarships and grants, but then also I had savings. I'm sure my parents helped me as well, but I was not wanting to just ask. My parents are already paying for my sister and I to go to college... That's enough. They're already helping us and I had student loans, I had financial aid. So, I used financial aid to help when I could, when it was available.</p> <p>As a college student I did not want to ask my parents for money.</p>

Appendix I

Study Abroad Preparedness

Subtheme	Participant Quote
Faculty-led Programs with African American faculty	<p>And it was really great to have someone who was so knowledgeable about the land, because that was his home. And He even took us to his hometown. And just, it made the experience that much richer, because it wasn't just someone that was knowledgeable from things that they had seen, or heard in a book or had learned secondhand.</p> <p>She (the professor) really prepared us. She made sure we knew the money, we knew small phrases to be able to make sure we found our way around without her. She even gave us some baseline ones (phrases) and then we were able to ask other ones. We were able to practice them, we practiced them with her. She had us prepare for the weather for all the different excursions or whatever that we were going to be doing. I felt very prepared thanks to her.</p> <p>I felt very prepared. We spent months in advance of the trip meeting the two professors that were in charge of this group and then the 16 students. We met regularly for several months beforehand talking about what the experience would be like, the thing that we needed to have in order prior to going and the things that we needed to do while on the trip.</p> <p>Both of the professors that accompanied us had been doing the program for several years. So I appreciate the fact that they were very familiar with the country and the state that we were visiting in. I think it would have been difficult to know what would have been most beneficial in terms of cultural education, outside of just being in the classroom. I think that piece would have been difficult to navigate on our own, or on my own.</p>
Lack of Information	<p>When we got to the to our host family we actually found that there were like other students from other institutions that were also staying with our family. So that was an interesting piece we didn't know that before we got there, that some of them were sharing rooms with us. We were not prepared. My understanding with the program, was very much different from what I got when I got there.</p> <p>I definitely thought it was going to be at more of a university. I thought I was going to be interacting with more Venezuelan university students, which I interacted with them but the program and the building that it was in was like exclusively Our study abroad program, and then relatively well-off Venezuelans that were trying to learn English of all ages. Most of them were not college age. I feel like I wasn't particularly prepared. I definitely could have known more, and might have been able to capitalize more. If I had known more</p> <p>I don't think they prepared us specifically as Black students going because I don't even think they knew that there was a different experience. But I think that the focus was more so on preparing honestly it was preparing the women.</p>
African American Peer Guidance	<p>I mean, even the people who I had spoken to, at least one of them was a person of color. She told me about her experience of being there in Copenhagen and what to expect. Or at least like from what her experience was like, what she experienced and telling me what that was like and then she literally was just like 'this is what you can expect when you go over there. So I felt as prepared as I possibly could be going abroad into a new country and a new social atmosphere.</p> <p>I wanted to go to Spain because my minor was Spanish. But then when I talk to some Black people that had been, they were like they don't like Black people over there. And then I got scared because I can speak Spanish and of course better now than I could then. But at the time I was scared I was gonna get lost somewhere and somebody was gonna be ugly to me. So, I decided to study in London.</p>
Limited Institutional Guidance	<p>I remember going there, and like nobody helped at all. And I don't know if it's because they didn't think I was serious, or because they didn't think I'd be able to afford it or what. But I remember going there and just kind of getting like "ok well just grab a brochure" you know. And like, ciao, thanks for stopping by. But there was no "ok, tell me what your interests are, what are you thinking about studying, like let's see what place would be a good fit for you. Like there was no dialogue whatsoever about that. It was just like, alright well you know, you're on your own.</p>

Subtheme	Participant Quote
	<p>There might have been like a general study abroad luncheon something or other at (my university), like non-program specific. I thought that I was the only person from (my university) going. But when I got there, I realized, there are two others that were enrolled in the program. But I had never met them prior on skype. Skype was a thing, zoom was not. But there wasn't any like Skype meeting prior to departure. Maybe there was some like group, emails, like, hey, these are your people but no formal orientation.</p> <p>There was not one (pre-departure orientation). Because, like I said, I went by myself, right? If they would have had meetings or something for us to do, I would have at least clicked up with some people from my school before I got to.</p>
Professor Support	<p>It was mostly the professors in the study abroad office. I remember the administrator was just making sure that we had all the documents that we needed, and knew where to go, but primarily. I remember talking with the professors .</p> <p>The professor's help more with like the, what to expect what your experience will be in Mexico, and the study abroad office was more just like the administrative side.</p> <p>My professors, that's how I learned about it. But hindsight, it was all on the professors, which there are other universities who have, our university at the time did not have a study abroad office. So, it was literally left up to the professors.</p> <p>Would it have been great to have a study abroad office, then yes, because it would have lifted some of the burden off of my professors who saw this as an opportunity that they wanted to make sure that we'd have. But I think they did a great job, especially for the capacity that they had. Like this was something that probably wasn't written in their tenure, it probably wasn't written in their job description but they knew that we needed to do this for our language acquisition skills. So, I mean I think they did a great job based on the resources that they had to share with us.</p>

Curriculum Vitae

Raquel Dailey

Education professional specializing in student development, educational equity, and international education

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EDUCATION

Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD **December 2020**
Doctor of Education

- *Specialization:* Entrepreneurial Leadership in Education
- *Concentration:* Equity and Access in International Education
- **Relevant Doctoral Coursework:** Leadership in Educational Organizations, Talent Management & Organizational Finance for Entrepreneurial Leaders, Building Strategic Educational Organization and Community Partnerships

Shenandoah University, Winchester, VA **August 2013**
Master of Education, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)

Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA **May 2007**
Master of Education, Higher Education and Student Affairs

- *Concentration:* Counseling

Hampton University, Hampton, VA **May 2004**
Bachelor of Arts, Spanish & Psychology

- *Specialization:* Spanish Literature

ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE

Assistant Director for International Career Development, Davidson College **January 2019 – Present**
Center for Career Development
Davidson, NC

- Enhance career and postgraduate opportunities for international students
- Align international students with a greater network of employers and build and leverage a network of domestic and international employers
- Collaborate with the Office of Alumni and Family Engagement, faculty, and other campus partners to strengthen and build the network of constituents for international students
- Develop sustainable relationships with international employers with career opportunities for both non-resident international and American students

Program Coordinator, James Madison University **March 2014 – December 2018**
College of Business & Center for Global Engagement
Harrisonburg, VA & Antwerp, Belgium

- Fostered international business relationships
- Facilitated cultural interactions between European and American students and companies
- Served as the primary contact for all JMU study abroad partners in Belgium
- Taught career development and training
- Performed career & academic advising and social program planning and implementation
- Liaised with European and American university constituents
- Managed accounts totaling approximately \$608,000 per fiscal year

Residence Education Coordinator, UNC at Charlotte
Department of Housing & Residence Life
Charlotte, NC

July 2007 – May 2011

- Taught leadership skills, career preparation, cultural awareness and mental health & wellness
- Primary contact for 750+ residential students
- Served as a contact in an on-call rotation for 5000 residential students
- Participated in selection, training, and evaluation for 13 Resident Advisors & 1 graduate student
- Performed a variety of programmatic, advising, and administrative duties for two residential facilities
- Supervised Academic and Social program planning and implementation
- Managed 13 undergraduate staff, 1 graduate assistant and 2 residential facilities
- Managed two separate accounts totaling approximately \$3200 per fiscal year

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Business English Lecturer, Hochschule Neu-Ulm
Department of Economics and Engineering
Neu-Ulm, Germany,

October 2012 – January 2014

- Taught Business English to German Engineering students
- Assisted German college students as they learned to apply their engineering skillsets in English

Introductory Spanish Lecturer, Hochschule Ravensburg-Weingarten
Language Department
Weingarten, Germany,

October 2012 – January 2014

- Taught Spanish to German students attending the Hochschule Ravensburg-Weingarten
- Developed Intermediate Spanish curriculum for native German speakers

Business and Technical English Lecturer, Hochschule Ravensburg-Weingarten
Department of Applied Economics and Language Department
Weingarten, Germany

**October 2011-
January 2014**

- Taught Basic and Intermediate English to German students attending the Hochschule Ravensburg-Weingarten
- Developed curriculum utilizing a blended platform combining both Business /Technical English and e-learning
- Helped European students prepare for the Cambridge Business English Proficiency exams

Business English Lecturer, Duale Hochschule Baden-Württemberg
Department of Industry and Tourism
Ravensburg, Germany,

October 2010 – January 2014

- Taught Business English for German students specializing in Industry and Tourism
- Conducted Vantage and Higher level BEC preparation courses

College Transition: Freshman Seminar Lecturer, UNC Charlotte
University College
Charlotte, NC,

August 2009 – December 2009

- Developed resources for career and internship opportunities to first-year students
- Introduced incoming college students to the resources available to them at the University
- Created service opportunities and cultural experiences for incoming college students
- Incorporated the University's common reading book into the course curriculum

SKILLS

- **Leadership:** Entrepreneurial & Global Leadership Development, Equity in Education, Cultural Competency & Awareness
- **Computer:** Microsoft Office (Excel, Word, Outlook, Power Point), Adobe Acrobat, Blackboard, Moodle, Canvas,
- **Language:** Proficient in Spanish, Upper-Intermediate level Dutch and German

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- **NAFSA:** Association for International Educators
- **NCACE:** North Carolina Association of Colleges and Employers
- **NACE:** National Association of Colleges and Employers
- **NCCDA:** North Carolina Career Development Association
- **AABHE:** American Association of Blacks in Higher Education